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ABSTRACT

A study investigated parents' experiences and their views on labor force participation and childcare arrangements. An in-depth interview was conducted with the parent or parents from 60 families with 5-year-old children, selected randomly from 14 schools in the greater Wellington, New Zealand, region. Results included the following: (1) playgroups were attended most often when the children were aged under 1 year, playcentre and childcare centers were used more often when the children were aged over 1 or 2 years, and among 4-year-olds, kindergartens were the type of service most frequently used; (2) socializing, travel or transport to the child care center, and fees or financial considerations; (3) responsibility for caring for children before they started school, or when they were sick or home from school for holidays fell primarily to the mothers; (4) within two-parent families, reading and learning activities at home were most often a shared responsibility; (5) 67 percent of the women and 98 percent of the men interviewed had participated in paid work during the first 5 years of their child's life; (6) difficulties noted by working parents included missing out on time with their children, time pressures, fitting in household tasks, guilt, and finding appropriate child care; (7) nearly half of the subjects were completing additional schooling during their child's first 5 years; (8) there was relatively low participation in parent leave among the parents who were in the paid workforce the year their child was born; and (9) parents expressed concern about the need for flexibility among employers and in the workplace, and about having domestic leave available for parents when their children are ill. (A copy of the survey is appended.) (HTH)

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employment & childcare ARRANGEMENTS among families

VALERIE N. PODMORE

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Employment and Childcare Arrangements Among Families

Valerie N. Podmore

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New Zealand Council for Educational Research
Wellington
1994

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates parents' experiences and their views on labour force participation and childcare arrangements. The research focuses on early childhood care and education arrangements, organisation of employment, and parental leave policies. Participants were 60 families with 5-year-old children, selected randomly from 14 schools in the greater Wellington region. In total, 101 people (59 women and 42 men) were interviewed. The families included: 41 families with 2 parents, where both the mother and the father were interviewed; 7 mother-only families and 1 father-only family; 1 family where the grandmother was the sole caregiver; and 10 families with 2 parents where only the mother was available for an interview. An in-depth interview about past and present employment and childcare arrangements was conducted with each consenting parent.

There was a high incidence of participation in the early childhood education and care services. Playgroups were attended most often when the children were aged under 1 year, playcentre and childcare centres were used more often when the children were aged over 1 or 2 years, and among 4-year-olds, kindergartens were the type of service most frequently used. Concurrent use of more than one early childhood service was relatively widespread. The benefits of early childhood care and education for parents and children usually concerned socialising and socialisation, and creative and learning activities were further benefits for the children. Difficulties concerned aspects of socialising, travel or transport to the early childhood centre, and fees or financial considerations.

Caring for the children before they started school was primarily the responsibility of the mothers. A few fathers had this responsibility. Informal care arrangements most often involved grandparents. Mothers were often responsible for caring for their children when they were sick, before school, after school, and in the holidays. Within the 2-parent families, reading and learning activities at home were more likely to be a shared responsibility. Most parents thought that reading at home was working out fairly well, and spontaneously made positive comments on their children's motivation or progress. Mothers were more likely to talk about the child's motivation. Time pressures were a problem for some parents in paid work.

In total, 67% of the women and 98% of the men interviewed had participated in paid work during the child's first 5 years of life. The percentage of mothers working full time increased to 19% by the year the children were 4 to 5 years of age. Each year from the child's birth up until school entry, over a third of the fathers were working 50 hours or more per week. There was some dissatisfaction among the fathers about the hours spent in paid work. Income was seen as the main benefit of paid work. Mothers also said that interest in the work itself and having contact with adults were benefits. Difficulties for parents who had worked during the child's first 5 years were missing out on having time with their children, time pressures, fitting in household tasks, guilt, and finding appropriate childcare. Financial difficulties influenced many parents' views on mothers of young children working.

Many participants thought fathers were obliged to be in paid work, but more than a third recommended more flexible roles within families.

In total, 47 parents had been studying during their child's first 5 years. University degree or diploma courses and courses at polytechnics were the types of courses most frequently undertaken. The number of parents who participated in study courses increased between the year the children were born and the year the children turned 5 years of age. Benefits experienced by parents who were studying included stimulation, interest, and satisfaction; developing marketable skills; and gaining more knowledge about childrearing. Difficulties encountered by parents who were studying when they had young children were tiredness or exhaustion, interruptions, time pressures, and financial needs. There was widespread involvement in voluntary work at early childhood centres, schools, in the community, at churches, sports clubs, and at Plunket and local parent support groups.

There was a relatively low uptake of parental leave among mothers and fathers who were in the paid workforce the year the children were born, and many who were in casual work were not eligible. Only 8 of the mothers took more than 1 month of leave, and only 3 mothers had any paid leave. Fathers tended to take from 2 days' up to 2 weeks' leave around the time of the birth. Only 1 father took more than 2 weeks of parental leave, only a few fathers remembered having paid parental leave, and 9 said they used their annual leave. Although some mothers were satisfied, many were dissatisfied about the amount of parental leave they had around the time of the birth.

Parents had a range of different recommendations on leave provisions for mothers and for fathers. Many expected that mothers should be entitled to 1 year of leave, or "the law as it is". Fathers were expected to have a few weeks of paid leave readily available to support the mother around the time of the birth. The importance of maintaining contact with the workplace while on parental leave was emphasised. Parents expressed concern about the need for flexibility among employers and in the workplace, and about having domestic leave available for parents when their children are ill. The difficulties of employers in small businesses were pointed out in regard to parental leave policies.

Some of the main themes evident in the study were: diversity and change in families' work and childcare arrangements, access to early childhood education and care, the need for flexibility in workplaces, the impact of long hours of paid work on families, financial constraints on taking up parental leave, and gender roles. It is proposed that further analyses of childcare arrangements, employment and education, and parental leave will be carried out at the case study level.

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The 60 participating families contributed invaluably to the study by sharing their time and their experiences. I acknowledge gratefully the co-operation of the 14 schools.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Rationale for the Study

This study was designed to investigate the experiences and perceptions of parents regarding labour force participation and childcare arrangements. The research focuses on organisation of employment, childcare arrangements, and parental leave policies. The past and present experiences of families with a 5-year-old child are documented.

The rationale for combining childcare and employment experiences in a single study is evident in this statement from the European Commission Childcare Network:

> The issue of childcare in relation to equality of opportunity involves not only the development of childcare services, but also changes in the way employment is organised to take account of family responsibilities and in the way childcare and other family responsibilities are divided between men and women.
> (1990, p.1)

The European Commission Childcare Network's (1990) document proposes that the sharing of childcare responsibilities "between parents is an essential part of strategies designed to increase equality in the labour market" (p.1).

Background Literature

Research from the U.S.

Research reports from the Families and Work Institute in the U.S. also support the importance of the interface between the early childhood care and education services, families, and the labour market. Ellen Galinsky and Dana Friedman (1993) have shown that children, parents, workplaces, and society all benefit from high quality childcare. They have also reported that high quality, flexible childcare arrangements are associated with lower absenteeism rates and less stress among parents who are employed (Galinsky & Friedman, 1993).

In an analysis of key issues in the U.S. debate on work and family, Marion Ferber, Brigid O'Farrell, and La Rue Allen (1991) outlined research findings on the impact of shift work on families. Research in the early 1980s on men working shifts reported generally negative effects on fathers' health and on their family life. However, Ferber *et al.* pointed out that the negative effects of shiftwork are more clearly apparent where the workers have little control over their schedules. They showed that more recently, positive interactions have

been found between fathers and children when the fathers have chosen to be on shift work in order to care for their children.

European Research

Several Swedish studies have investigated parental labour force participation, and childcare policies and arrangements (Andersson & Sandqvist, 1982; Gunnarsson, in press; Sandqvist, 1987a, 1987b, 1992). Much of this research has been developed within an ecological framework, and the Swedish authors advocate interpreting research findings on employment and childcare arrangements and outcomes within their appropriate contexts (Andersson, 1992; Gunnarsson, personal communication; Sandqvist, 1987a).

Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, developed in the U.S. in the late 1970s and elaborated during the 1980s, has influenced these studies of parental labour force participation and childcare. Lars Gunnarsson's and Bengt-Erik Andersson's (1992) emphasis on the social, political, and economic context of their Swedish research on childcare, and Karin Sandqvist's (1987a) reference to social contexts in her work on fathers and childcare responsibilities, demonstrate some more recent applications of the ecological view. Bengt-Erik Andersson (1992), for example, showed in his long-term follow up studies of children that children who started centre-based or family daycare before the age of 1 year performed better in school and tended to be rated more highly by their teachers on their social and emotional behaviour at 8 years and again at 13 years of age. Bengt-Erik Andersson then pointed out that his research results on early childcare experience should be understood within the Swedish context. The context of the research differed from American studies because family and child policies in Sweden include very high standards of daycare, and provision for leave on full pay for parents with infants aged under 6 months.

Karin Sandqvist (1987a) reported comparative Swedish and U.S. data on the sharing of childcare and household tasks. Differences were evident between the fathers in Sweden and those in the U.S. on their general responsibility for their children. In both countries, fathers took on more responsibility for their children when the mother was in the labour force, but there was a more marked trend in Sweden for younger fathers to be more involved with their children. Karin Sandqvist discussed the changing trends in family work within their cultural and historical contexts, referring to evidence in the research literature that "Swedish fathers had a longer tradition of involvement in caring for young children" than fathers in the U.S. (Sandqvist, 1987a, p.190).

In an exploratory study, Rapoport and Moss (1990) have described parental leave in Sweden and career breaks in the U.K. Their study highlights the impact of different policies on parental participation in the labour force. They recommended that several dimensions of change in workplace organisations were needed to benefit organisational productivity and to enhance gender equity. These included: changing the culture and structure of work organisations; implementing any new policy by communicating the ideas and values inherent in the policy, introducing flexible workplaces, and supporting men's uptake of parental leave; and developing effective ways of dealing with barriers to change.

Australian Studies

Research by Gay Ochiltree (1991) and colleagues at the Australian Institute of Family Studies investigated the employment experiences of mothers. This Australian large-scale questionnaire and interview study with mothers of 5-year-old children aimed to document mothers' reasons for working or not working, their management of home and work responsibilities, and the mothers' and children's wellbeing. Analyses of their retrospective interview data are nearing completion.

Australian researchers have also identified the importance of recognising women's work by "raising the status of the child care industry" (Petrie, 1992, p.3). Some recent improvements in parental leave policies have been documented by Iola Matthews (1992), who described the 1990 Australian Industrial Relations Commission's implementation of a provision which granted 1 year of unpaid parental leave to be shared between both parents.

New Zealand Research

In New Zealand, several researchers have commented on the diversity of family organisation and characteristics (Cairns, 1991; Koopman-Boyden, 1991; Meade & Rosemergy, 1986). During the early 1980s Anne Meade and Margaret Rosemergy (1986) studied the support networks of 68 families with preschool-aged children in the greater Wellington region and reported that half of the main caregivers participated in the labour force, two-thirds of them used some form of childcare, and partners most frequently cared for the children while the main caregiver worked. They did not find a "typical New Zealand family", but a range of 2-parent, 1-parent, and extended families of varying sizes.

More recently, Paul Callister has used Census data to document the changing patterns of labour market participation within families. A paper by Judith Davey and Paul Callister (in press) reported their analyses of information from the "From Birth to Death III" database. They showed that the percentage of children aged under 5 years whose mothers were **not in the paid workforce** decreased between 1981 and 1991. This trend applied to children aged 1 to 4 years, and also to infants aged under 1 year. The trend was evident for Maori, "Pacific Island", and Pakeha families between the years of 1981 and 1986, but between 1986 and 1991 the "downward trend of non-participation" reversed for Maori and "Pacific Island" families with children aged 1 to 4 years (Davey & Callister, in press, p.4). In 1991 46% of the 1- to 4-year-old Pakeha children in 2-parent families had mothers who were in paid work, compared with 41% of the Maori children and 40% of the "Pacific Island" children in that age group. During that decade, the proportion of children aged under 5 years who lived with a sole parent had more than doubled, reaching 1:5 by 1991. Although the proportion of children in that age group living with a sole father trebled during that decade, it had reached only 1:50 by 1991. Situations in 2-parent families ranged from those where both parents were in full-time jobs (11%), to those where the family had no market income (10%).

Marlene Levine, Helen Wyn, and Lanuola Asiasiga (1993) reported a more in-depth study specifically focused on lone parents. Their research was designed to identify the major factors influencing lone parents' participation in the paid workforce. In-depth, "loosely

structured" interviews were conducted with 95 lone parents, 81 females and 14 males, who lived in the Wellington, Porirua, and Masterton districts. These lone parents included 67 beneficiaries, 24 ex-beneficiaries, and 4 non-beneficiaries. Parents who were participating in work or training almost all used some form of care if they had a child aged under 5 years, and family or whanau members were the most prevalent providers of care for the children. Nearly three-quarters of the lone parents were in favour of, or suggested the need for, conditions of employment which allowed leave for caring for sick children. Nearly two-thirds wanted flexible hours of work, and nearly two-thirds were in favour of extending childcare subsidies to include payment to private persons, for example their own family and whanau members, for providing childcare. The researchers reported a clear need for care before and after school, during the holidays, and after school hours. They recommended that "any policy measures aimed at encouraging lone parents' participation in the workforce will need to take account of the range of attitudes towards childcare and the value many parents place on being able to care for their children themselves" (Levine, Wyn, & Asiasiga, 1993, p.25).

Another study of parents receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB), reported by Gloria McGirr (1994), developed a profile of those who received a childcare subsidy but were not in employment, training, or education. Licensed childcare centres, family daycare, and kohanga reo were the early childhood services in predominant use by the 70 clients McGirr interviewed. Their main reason for using childcare was to reduce maternal stress; because they were depressed, unable to manage their anger, or lonely, and they needed to "have a break". McGirr concluded that reducing the childcare subsidy would have a negative impact on the wellbeing of young children and DPB families. A further recommendation was that the issue of after-school care would need to be addressed if DPB clients continued to be encouraged to participate in further education and training.

In a study of infants and toddlers in New Zealand childcare centres, Valerie Podmore and Barbara Craig (1991) found that between 1989 and 1990 there was a marked increase in the number of children aged under 2 years attending childcare centres. The researchers reported that representatives of professional groups (from the education and health sectors) emphasised the need for changes in the workplace towards the provision of more adequate parental leave when young children are ill.

To promote more integrated economic policies and workplace practices, a number of writers and policy makers have highlighted the need to recognise women's experiences in and out of the workforce (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 1993; Wood, 1991). Marion Wood (1991) has pointed out that "current economic orthodoxy" in New Zealand does not recognise unpaid work as productive, or as part of the market:

> This means that unpaid work in the household, producing and raising children, caring for dependants, voluntary community work and business support work is not measured as part of the economy: the corollary is that it is not taken into account in economic policy.
> (p.66)

In addition, women who are in the paid workforce "tend to be underpaid, underskilled and underrepresented" (Wood, 1991, p.68).

A phone-in survey by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (1993) has reported the needs and recommendations of 1043 employees and 106 employers who either spontaneously responded to a national phone-in, or completed a written questionnaire as part of a more structured survey, on family and employment issues. Of these respondents, 750 employees and 50 employers from throughout New Zealand made telephone calls and talked about their ideas and experiences, the remainder completed the questionnaires. The employees were asked what happened at work when they had family problems or an emergency, usual work arrangements that helped them manage work and family responsibilities, their family commitments and responsibilities, their type of work, the number of staff at their workplace, and the number of hours they worked. Employers outlined their arrangements and their policies which assisted staff with family responsibilities, and summarised the associated benefits. Two themes evident in the respondents' comments were flexibility of employers and employees, and mutual trust. Employees wanted: more widely available and accessible childcare; domestic leave that was separate from and in addition to sick leave; more options and choices of flexible arrangements; and more support systems to cover emergencies. Although some employers expressed concern about potential abuse of their generosity, and said they were sometimes inconvenienced by employees' family crises, they mentioned more benefits than problems. The few staff from sales, factory, and catering and service industries who responded appeared to have limited flexibility and support.

New Zealand's legislative provision, with 1 year of parental leave for either parent, is set out in the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987, and the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Amendment Act 1991 (New Zealand Government, 1988, 1993). In a subsequent study of parental leave taken from the New Zealand Customs Department, Dana Glendining (1992) reported the experiences of 47 people who had taken parental leave between 1987 and 1992, and documented their recommendations on parental leave policy and practices. Thirty-eight of these recommendations were specific to the N.Z. Customs Department's management and communications. In addition, there were 2 recommendations to other agencies. One was that the Public Service Association and other employee organisations should ensure that staff on parental, sick, and childcare leave are informed regularly that they remain members as of right. A further recommendation was that there should be more community education to increase fathers' uptake of parental leave and to extend and equalise their participation in parenting.

There has been some recent interest in surveying New Zealand families' use of the early childhood education and care services (e.g., National Research Bureau, 1993), and in investigating families' multiple use of early childhood education and care services (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1987). The conclusions drawn at an NZCER seminar on "multi child care use" included: that families' demands for early childhood education services were becoming more diverse and complex, that diversification of these services should be explored, and that the "delivery of early childhood services must be flexible, and sensitive to the changing needs of families" (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1987, p.30).

A survey of caregivers of children aged under 5 years was carried out by the National Research Bureau (1993). The survey aimed to obtain information for the Ministry of Education about the types of early childhood education services used by children aged under 5 years and their families, the extent and costs of use, and the reasons for use or non-use of these services. A national sample of 1700 primary caregivers completed a short, structured interview in the respondent's home. Over all, 65% of the children aged under 5 years were using some type of early childhood education and care facility. The percentage participating in early education increased with age: 21% of infants aged under 12 months, 59% of toddlers aged 12 to 23 months, 73% of 2-year-olds, 82% of 3-year-olds, and 93% of children aged 4 years were using some form of early childhood education and care service. Among the respondents using care, 26% undertook paid work which overlapped with childcare, and 13% were involved in study or work training that overlapped with their use of an early childhood service (most often te kohanga reo, playcentre, a childcare centre, or a Pacific Island language group).

Currently, Anne Meade, Anne Hendricks, and Cathy Wylie are investigating the influences of early childhood experiences on children's competence. Their pilot study included children and families from a community childcare centre, an urban playcentre, a rural playcentre, a kindergarten, a family daycare scheme, and a Samoan language nest (Hendricks & Meade with Wylie, 1993). They reported that New Zealand patterns of early childhood centre attendance are complex, and that many of the pilot study children concurrently attended more than one type of service. There were "no reports of problems for children or families" who used more than one service at the same time, although several parents said they needed to be well organised (Hendricks *et al.*, 1993, p.30). Many parents said that the benefits of early childhood education and care attendance for their children were: social-emotional benefits, cognitive language benefits, physical benefits, or cultural benefits. A small group of non-users of early childhood services was also located, although it was difficult to access this group because participation rates are high. The aim of the ongoing longitudinal study is to follow children from the age of 4 years 9 months until they leave school. This research includes a qualitative study of 300 children, and a large-scale telephone survey of the parents of 1500 young children. The intention is to increase understanding of how different early childhood experiences influence children from different family backgrounds.

International research has already demonstrated that high quality early childhood care and education has educational benefits for children (Podmore, 1993, 1994; Wylie, 1994a). In New Zealand further research was warranted to document in greater depth the experiences of families who combine work or study and childcare arrangements. There remained scope for further research on parents' participation in the workforce set in a New Zealand context. A systematic, in-depth study was needed of parents' experiences of employment and parental leave policies during the first 5 years of their children's lives. To ensure an adequately integrated approach to the concept of employment, parents' participation in voluntary work, study, and unpaid caregiving needed to be included.

There was also a recognised need in New Zealand for more information on aspects of child poverty and financial support for children and families. Increasing concern about these issues is evident in the New Zealand research literature (Robertson, 1992; St John, 1991;

Waldegrave, 1991), and in other recent international publications (e.g., Hewlett, 1993). In the present study, it was anticipated that subsidiary data might be obtained on the parents' experiences of unemployment and income adequacy or inadequacy during the first 5 years of their child's life.

Aims of the Study

The present study aimed to obtain in-depth data on the labour force participation, childcare arrangements, and experiences of parental leave policies of families with young children. The research was designed to investigate:

- the employment patterns and experiences of parents during the first 5 years of their children's lives;
- the childcare arrangements and experiences of families from a child's birth to school entrance;
- the influences of parental leave policies on families;
- the main concerns, perceptions and recommendations of parents regarding employment and workforce participation during the first 5 years of their children's lives.

This study had 2 interdependent objectives:

1. To identify a sample of families and to develop appropriate research measures, in order to interview mothers and fathers about their workforce participation and childcare arrangements, by:

   - defining a representative sample of parents with 5-year-old children, selected from new entrant class rolls;
   - developing and trialling interview schedules focused on maternal and paternal past and present employment and the childcare arrangements.

2. To document the labour force participation, childcare arrangements, and experiences of parental leave policies of families with young children, thereby extending current knowledge, by:

   - conducting in-depth interviews with each consenting parent of 40 to 50 children, all aged 5 years and randomly selected from new entrant class rolls;
   - developing coding categories for the participants' responses to open-ended questions;
   - analysing the coded interview data to develop descriptions and patterns of mothers' and fathers' employment experiences, childcare arrangements, and perceptions and experiences regarding parental leave and income.

Chapter 2

RESEARCH METHODS

Sample

It was planned that the participants would include 40 to 50 families (and thus about 80 parents). This was increased to 60 families to ensure sufficient interviews were available for future in-depth case study analysis. Random samples of 30% of the new entrants were to be drawn from each of 14 schools in the Wellington education district.

Schools were chosen systematically from throughout the greater Wellington region, using a stratified random sampling procedure to ensure that rural and urban areas were represented in proportion to junior school roll sizes. In the first instance, 14 schools (being about 6% of the schools in the region) were selected, and letters requesting consent to participate were sent to the principal with an enclosed letter for the board of trustees. Of the first 14 schools, 9 agreed to participate. The remaining 5 declined to participate, 2 on the grounds that the board of trustees would not permit the release of any names of any children or families to any person (1 board had an established policy to this effect, and another board cited the Privacy Act, 1993), 1 because it was already hosting an intensive research project involving all of the 5-year-old children enrolled there, 1 because of time pressures resulting from staff turnover and shortages, and at 1 school a message stated that the principal was "not interested in participating". Another 5 replacement schools were selected using the same proportional random procedure. All of these, which were next on the list from those who had declined, agreed to participate. In total, 14 of the 19 schools approached agreed to participate (74%).

Within the 14 schools, samples of families were drawn proportional to roll size to safeguard against sample bias. The researchers planned that, at each school, a randomly selected 30% of the families with 5-year-olds who had started school within the last 6 months would be invited to participate. The sample therefore included 2 to 9 families per school. Permission was sought in several stages, and some schools decided to seek parental permission before passing on addresses and/or names of families to the researchers. The participating families were selected from the lists provided by the schools, using random number tables. A few of the families who were randomly selected and contacted by the researchers declined to participate, and were replaced with the next random replacement family on the list. Among the families we contacted from the 14 schools, 82% agreed to participate.

The researchers made repeated visits to contact some families who either did not have a telephone or had recently had their telephone disconnected. Where families were suspicious of "officials", we found that it was important to make personal contact, to establish rapport, and to explain the independent nature of the research. The researchers respected the right

Table 1

Ethnic Group Descriptions of the Participating Women and Men and their 5-Year-Old Children

Ethnic Group	Women N	Women (%)	Men N	Men (%)	Children N	Children (%)
N.Z. European/Pakeha	44	(74)	31	(74)	43	(72)
Maori	5	(8)	4	(10)	7	(12)
Samoan	4	(7)	0	(0)	4	(7)
Chinese	2	(3)	2	(5)	2	(3)
European	0	(0)	3	(7)	0	(0)
Tongan	1	(2)	1	(2)	2	(3)
Cook Island Maori	1	(2)	0	(0)	0	(0)
Indian	1	(2)	0	(0)	1	(2)
Malaysian/Eurasian	1	(2)	0	(0)	1	(2)
Not known	0	(0)	1	(2)	0	(0)
Total	59	(100)	42	(100)	60	(101)*

Note:
The 1991 Census ethnicity data for the N.Z. Resident Population included: N.Z. European = 73.8%; N.Z. Maori = 12.9%; Pacific Island Polynesian = 5%; Chinese = 1.3%; Indian = 0.9%; Chinese and Indian populations were overrepresented in the Wellington region (Thompson, 1993).
* Percentage totals more than 100 as a result of rounding.

of the families to choose to decline, and we refrained from asking why anyone declined to participate. One reason given spontaneously by parents who declined was lack of time due to long working hours and work-related travel. In addition, a few families were leaving for holidays when they were approached.

The 60 families who contributed to this study included: 41 families with 2 parents where both the mother and the father were interviewed, 7 mother-only families and 1 father-only family, 1 family where the grandmother was the sole caregiver, and 10 families with 2 parents where only the mother was available for an interview. The 41 families where 2 parents were interviewed included several reconstituted families where the male parent was not the biological father. They also included two situations where the mother and father who were interviewed shared the childcare arrangements but resided in separate households. A few parents described themselves as foster parents. In total, from the 60 families with a 5-year-old child, 101 people (59 women and 42 men) participated in the interviews.

The majority of the participating parents were born and grew up in urban New Zealand (N = 52, 51%), or in rural or small town New Zealand (N = 28, 28%). In addition, 5 parents were born and brought up in the U.K., 5 in Asia (Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Singapore), 4 in Samoa, 3 in Continental Europe (the Netherlands, Yugoslavia), 2 in Tonga, 1 on Rarotonga, and 1 in Africa.

The ethnic group identity of the participants in this random sample appeared relatively representative in terms of census characteristics. The majority of 5-year-old children were described by their parents as New Zealand European or Pakeha (72%), and 7 of the 60 children (12%) were identified as Maori. Among the adults who described their ethnic group, 75 (74%) identified as New Zealand European or Pakeha, 9 (9%) as Maori, 4 (4%) as Samoan, 4 (4%) as Chinese, 3 as European (Dutch, British), 2 as Tongan, 1 as Rarotongan, 1 as Malaysian, 1 as Indian. Further details of the ethnic group identity of the participating men and women and their 5-year-old children are shown in Table 1. Within the families, Maori fathers and Chinese fathers invariably participated in the interviews, European/Pakeha fathers usually participated, and Samoan fathers tended not to participate.

The participating parents were asked how many years they had spent at secondary school. This ranged in duration from 0 to 7 years. Those who had spent 3 years or more at secondary school were asked about the school qualifications they had completed. Participants also provided information about the educational or "on-the-job" qualifications they had completed since leaving school. This information is summarised in Table 2, which suggests that more women than men had not completed school and post-school qualifications. In this study, 30% of the women and 17% of the men had not completed any school qualifications. In comparison, the 1991 Census showed that 41% of women and 43% of men had not completed school qualifications (Statistics New Zealand, 1994). It was not appropriate to provide comparative data from the 1991 Census on Table 2, because the Census categories do not include "on-the-job" or "in-house" qualifications, mentioned by 24% of the women and 40% of the men in this study.

Table 2

Educational Qualifications of the Participating Women and Men

Completed Qualifications	Women N	Women (%)	Men N	Men (%)
Highest school qualification:				
No school qualification	18	(30)	7	(17)
School Certificate (1+ subjects)	16	(27)	11	(26)
Sixth Form Certificate/University Entrance (1+ subjects)	10	(17)	9	(21)
Higher School Certificate/Higher Leaving Certificate	4	(7)	5	(12)
University Bursary or Scholarship	4	(7)	3	(7)
Other school qualification (e.g., overseas)	7	(12)	4	(10)
Don't know, don't remember	0	(0)	3	(7)
Total	59	(100)	42	(100)
Post-school qualifications:				
No completed post-school qualifications	21	(35)	6	(14)
Trade Certificate or Advanced Trade Certificate	0	(0)	8	(19)
Nursing Certificate or Diploma	1	(2)	1	(2)
Teaching Certificate or Diploma	4	(7)	1	(2)
New Zealand Certificate or Diploma/Technician's Certificate	1	(2)	1	(2)
Bachelor's Degree	4	(7)	9	(21)
Postgraduate Degree, Certificate or Diploma	3	(5)	1	(2)
Other qualifications (e.g., ACA, Polytechnic Certificate)	11	(18)	6	(14)
On-the-job/in-house qualifications	14	(24)	17	(40)
Total (*some participants gave multiple responses)	59	(100)	50*	(119)*

The ages of the parents or guardians ranged from 22 to 47 years (Mean = 35 years, S.D. = 5.6). The women's ages ranged from 22 to 47 years (Mean = 34 years, S.D. = 5.6), and the men's ages ranged from 24 to 47 years (Mean = 37 years, S.D. = 5.3).

The number of adults living in each participating household ranged from 1 to 3. The majority of households had 2 adults (82%), some households had 1 adult (13%), and a few households (5%) had 3 adults in residence including the child's grandparent or aunt.

The number of children in each household ranged from 1 to 7. The birth order of the 5-year-old children ranged from 1 to 6, but the majority of the 60 children were second born (N = 24, 40%), first born (N = 22, 37%), or third born (N = 7, 12%) in their families. Of the 5-year-old children, 33 (55%) were girls and 27 (45%) were boys.

Procedure

The participating schools provided lists of the children aged 5 years who had commenced school within 6 months prior to the researchers' request for information. Letters explaining the purpose and procedures of the research and inviting participation were sent to the parents of the 5-year-old children who were randomly selected from the lists provided by the schools.

An in-depth interview about past and present employment and childcare arrangements was conducted with each consenting parent. The interviews took place at a time and venue selected by the participants. In the case of 2-parent families, the researchers planned to interview the mother and father separately. Parents' preferences were also accommodated by interviewing some couples together where requested. Most interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, provided that the parent was willing.

A copy of the interview schedule is included as Appendix A. The interview included background questions, and open-ended questions grouped under 3 major topic areas. The first section was concerned with early childhood/childcare arrangements. The questions were about:

> the child's education and care experiences during each of the first 5 years of life;
> the arrangements made to help with homework after the child started school;
> the organisation of care before and after school, at times of illness, and during the major school holiday.

The second section was on labour force participation. Questions focused on the parents' experiences, during each of the child's first 5 years, of:

> paid employment or seeking work;
> study and educational courses;
> voluntary work.

The final section, on parental leave, included questions about:

parents' experiences of, and views on, parental leave.

The interview questions were developed to investigate the patterns of experiences of the participants over time. Each participant described in detail their patterns of employment and use of early childhood education services year-by-year from their child's birth to her/his first months at school. The open-ended questions and probes explored in some detail the participants' perceptions and their experiences of employment and childcare arrangements. Drawing on phenomenological approaches to interview research (Giorgi, 1986), the intention was to explore the meanings of these experiences for the participants.

Retrospective interviews were selected as a relatively cost-effective method of tracking the experiences of families of a cohort of children. As Gay Ochiltree's Australian research also used retrospective interviews with mothers of 5-year-old children, there seemed scope for possible comparisons on some findings in the future. Classic critiques of interviews as a research method have appropriately emphasised that selective recall, memory errors, and social desirability needs of the participants are potential problems associated with this method (e.g., Wrightsman, 1972), and retrospective interviews are potentially particularly susceptible to memory errors. In this study, all of the researchers, and some of the participants, used various safeguards on these dimensions. The researchers recognised that developing a good rapport is important if social desirability effects are to be minimised in interview research. When developing the interview schedule and procedure, the researchers stressed the importance of establishing rapport with the informants, and all interviewers had personal experience of employment and childcare arrangements. Throughout the interviews, the diverse opinions expressed by the informants were accepted unconditionally without any judgments. It was not consistent with the focus on developing rapport to ask the participants to produce documentation as part of the interview. However, several participants interviewed at home did choose to confer with other family members, or less frequently to consult documents, to assist with their recall of events and experiences. Documentation spontaneously produced for this purpose included photograph albums and photographs of their children's first 5 years, curricula vitae, Plunket books, and more rarely, documents about their work including one workplace's parental leave policy. The researchers found that, despite their emphasis on rapport, for a few participants it was difficult to remember certain events which occurred 4 or 5 years ago. Accordingly, any areas where there were difficulties with recall are recorded in the report. Tabulated information is confined to data on the more recent or current experiences.

Coding categories were developed for the open-ended questions, based on the responses recorded in 90% of the transcribed interviews. One researcher completed most of the coding, assisted by 2 of the other researchers who had carried out the interviews. Inter-coder reliability checks were made on the open-ended questions of 10% of the interview schedules. Inter-coder reliability percentages, calculated on the basis of agreements, disagreements, and omissions, ranged from 81.25% to 94%, with a mean of 88.37%. Coded data from the interviews were entered into a database and descriptive data were analysed.

Main themes and patterns were discovered by detailed reading of all of the 101 transcripts, through the development of coding categories and from the descriptive data, and by the

application of related research literature. In this report, data are presented qualitatively in the form of excerpts from transcripts which, from a phenomenological perspective, begin to illustrate what the participants' experiences meant for them. It is intended that this work will be developed further by carrying out follow-up analyses at the case study level. There is also an emphasis on the context of the participants' experiences, reflecting the theoretical underpinning of an ecological approach.

Chapter 3

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

This chapter provides information about the allocation of responsibility within families for young children's care, the informal childcare arrangements made, and families' experiences with the early childhood education and care services which are documented on a year-by-year basis. Arrangements for the 5-year-old children's care, learning, and reading at home are also described.

Responsibility for the Child's Care before 5 Years

Primary Caregivers

All participants were asked who had the main responsibility for caring for the 5-year-old child before he or she started school. This appeared to be primarily the responsibility of the mothers. The answer given by 33 (79%) of the men and 45 (76%) of the women, was "mainly his/her mother".

In 3 (5%) of the families, the father had been the person with most responsibility for the child's care during the first 5 years. Other couples thought they had shared the care equally, and accordingly 5 mothers and 4 fathers replied "both of us" or "mother and father equally".

Five of the women (8%) said that the child's grandparents had been the main caregivers: 3 said mainly the grandmother, 1 said mainly the grandfather who lived with the family and took on the main responsibility, and 1 mother said that she and the child's grandparents had shared the care equally. Members of the 2 families (3%) who had employed a nanny replied that the parent/s and the paid caregiver had shared the caregiving responsibility. Two men, who commented that their families had been reconstituted during the past 5 years, said that they were not involved in the arrangements during the first year of the child's life.

Informal Care Arrangements

The parents were asked if they had any informal childcare arrangements with someone else, for example, regular arrangements with relatives or friends. They discussed the benefits, and any difficulties, they had experienced with these arrangements during the child's first 5 years. In total, 28 (47%) of the families had made regular informal childcare arrangements.

Such arrangements were most frequently made with the child's grandparents. Thirteen (22%) of the 60 families had regular, informal arrangements with grandparents; for 7 children these arrangements were with both grandparents, and for 6 children they were with the grandmother.

Another 4 (7%) of the families had informal arrangements with the parent/s' friend/s. Other informal childcare arrangements were with: the child's great aunt/s, i.e., the parent's aunt (3 families); the child's aunt/s, i.e., the parent's sister/s (2 families); a neighbour or community contact (3 families); other relatives, e.g., cousins (2 families); and with the non-custodial parent (1 family).

Clearly, the main benefit of these arrangements for the parents was being able to return to work, and this was mentioned by 14 mothers and 8 fathers. This mother's comments were typical:

> Well it meant that I could go out to work. My parents have been absolutely wonderful and I think it's been really good for her to have so much contact with them.

A second benefit, discussed by 9 mothers and 5 fathers, was knowing the child was safe and secure with a well-known person.

Other benefits for the parents were having a break or time out from the child (4 mothers, 5 fathers); flexibility and convenience of care arrangements (4 mothers and 5 fathers); cultural appropriateness having grandparents involved during the child's early years (4 mothers and 1 father); financial and cost-related benefits (3 mothers, 3 fathers); having more time for the "husband-wife relationship" (2 fathers); and having more time for household tasks (1 mother).

There were several benefits for the child. The one mentioned most often, by 12 mothers and 5 fathers, was having contact with the extended family:

> Well it means that she's got a really good relationship with her grandparents. Also the fact that she's been used to having contact with a large range of people generally since she was quite young has made her quite independent and socially mature for her age.

Social stimulation was discussed by 4 mothers and 7 fathers, and contact with other children by 4 mothers and 5 fathers. Another 5 mothers and 2 fathers said that the child was happy and enjoyed it, 3 mothers and 2 fathers mentioned the child's becoming more independent, 4 mothers thought that it was good for the child to be in a familiar environment, 1 mother and 1 father said the care was consistent with their own practices, and 1 mother was pleased that siblings were able to stay together.

In the main the parents remembered few or no difficulties with these arrangements. The most frequently mentioned difficulty for parents concerned transport and travel arrangements. Comments about this were made by 4 mothers and 3 fathers. As one mother said:

> Well it seemed to work out all right. Just knowing I had to get back 'cos we lived in an isolated community. If you went somewhere it took all day, and the responsibility of getting back.

Another difficulty was the workload of the parents, and the pressure to return to work. Two mothers and 2 fathers had found it too busy both working: "When we both worked it was hell". The only other difficulties were: the parent/s preferred to be doing the caregiving themselves (2 mothers, 1 father); differences in childrearing ideas (2 mothers); dissatisfaction with shared custody arrangements (2 mothers); concern about the person caregiving or the standard of care (2 fathers); and concern that the child might become sick (1 mother).

Early Childhood Education and Care Arrangements

Almost all of the parents had been in contact with the early childhood education and care services. We asked about their own and their child's experiences on a year-by-year basis. The focus was on the type of service used, and on any benefits experienced and difficulties encountered.

Early Childhood Education and Care from Birth to 1 Year

The information provided by the parents showed that playgroups were the most prevalent type of early childhood care and education used while their infants were aged under 1 year. Of the 60 children, 13 (22%) attended playgroups and 4 (7%) attended a childcare centre or a creche. Two attended each of the following: a playcentre, family daycare, a kohanga reo, or a church creche. One attended each of these: a mobile kindergarten, a Samoan language nest, and a kindergarten (where an older sibling was enrolled).

When aged under 1 year, 5 (8%) of the children participated in more than one early childhood education and care service. Of these, one arrangement was sequential, and the child moved from a playgroup to family daycare when his parent resumed paid work. The other arrangements were all concurrent ones and they included these combinations: a childcare centre and a playgroup; a childcare centre and a playcentre; a creche and a playgroup; and a childcare centre and a kohanga reo.

Social benefits were experienced by parents whose infants participated in early childhood care and education. Twelve mothers and 2 fathers said that meeting other adults/parents was one of the good things they remembered. In addition, 4 mothers and 1 father made comments about the benefits of knowing their infant's emotional needs were being met.

Three mothers with infants at playcentre or playgroup found it was good having parents involved with the children. Another 3 mothers, who were users of childcare centres and family daycare, talked about the benefits of having time for work or study while their infant's needs were catered for, and 3 mentioned having some "time out" away from their infant.

The mothers (and 1 father) of 3 children, including the 2 infants who had attended playcentre, talked about the benefits of having siblings together at early childhood centres. They found that having more than 1 child at a centre which catered for children aged from birth to 5 years had been convenient for themselves, and of benefit to the child:

> He attended playcentre with his older brother. He wasn't excluded like some early childhood centres. Because he had an older brother attending

> playcentre, he fitted in so much easier. He became one of the older children, he always seemed to be with children a year older because he was there at birth. He grew up a lot faster.

Parents whose young child had attended a kohanga reo said that language maintenance and cultural continuity had been important for themselves and their child. A mother whose child attended a kohanga reo from infancy described the benefits as:

> Her culture. It's okay to learn about how to go on a marae, what to do, what to expect, the protocol, but the language was missing. It was a big thing for her to learn the language as well as other Maori culture things.

The main benefits for the infants themselves were described as social, or having their emotional needs met. Sixteen mothers and 5 fathers said that socialisation with other children had been beneficial for their infants.

A few parents remembered difficulties at this stage. Two mothers mentioned transport difficulties, and 2 said they felt shy when trying to get to know people at the centre. One couple mentioned time pressures, 1 father said the high cost of childcare fees was a difficulty, 1 mother mentioned a clash with other adults at the centre, and 1 said her infant was unsettled.

There appeared to be relatively few difficulties for the infants. Two mothers mentioned interruptions to their infants' sleeping patterns, 2 commented on the child's difficulties when separating from parents, 1 said that napkins were changed insufficiently frequently at the centre, and 1 thought it had been difficult for her infant being the smallest in the group.

Early Childhood Education and Care from 1 to 2 Years

By this stage, playgroups were still most prevalent, but the number of children at childcare centres and playcentres had increased. Of the 60 children, 16 (27%) attended playgroups, 8 (13%) were at a childcare centre or a creche, and 7 (12%) were at playcentre. In addition, 2 children were in family daycare, 2 at a kohanga reo, and 2 had a nanny. One child attended each of these: a mobile kindergarten, a creche at church, and a kindergarten (where an older sibling was enrolled).

Seven children (12%) experienced more than one type of early childhood service, and all of these combinations were concurrent rather than sequential. The combined arrangements sometimes involved having a caregiver (family daycare provider or nanny) take the child to an early childhood centre. The 7 different combinations were: a playgroup and a caregiver; a childcare centre and a playgroup; a childcare centre and a playcentre; a playcentre and a nanny; a kohanga reo and a playgroup; a childcare centre and family daycare; and a playgroup and a kindergarten (the latter attended regularly but as a sibling).
When the parents were asked about the benefits of the early childhood care and education arrangements for themselves, social benefits remained prevalent, and were discussed by 17 mothers and 8 fathers. Seven mothers and 2 fathers said it was beneficial to know that the child's emotional needs were being met.

There was a slight increase in the number of parents (5 mothers and 4 fathers) who mentioned having the child's needs catered for while they worked or studied. Two fathers and 2 mothers thought it was good to have a break from the child, and time to spend with the other children in the family.

Four mothers with children at playcentre saw parent education as a benefit for themselves:

> The best thing about playcentre is I learnt about looking after children, child development. I learnt about how to keep a child entertained. I learnt about why they do things when they do them and it gave me a really good understanding of, I suppose, child development. That would be the biggest thing. That would be the major thing.

Another 3 mothers commented favourably on parents being involved with the children at the centre or playgroup. One mother and 1 father commented on the convenience of having siblings together. The 2 mothers whose child attended a kohanga reo described language maintenance as a benefit for the whole family.

The main benefits for the children were still seen as social ones, with 21 mothers and 12 fathers mentioning the importance of socialising with other children. By this stage, more mothers also talked about positive influences of early childhood care and education on their children's learning. Six mothers and 2 fathers made comments pertaining to learning or cognitive development, 8 mothers and 1 father mentioned creative activities, and 1 mother talked about language development/verbal stimulation.

In addition, 7 mothers and 2 fathers said that the child was happy or her/his emotional needs were being met, 3 mothers and 1 father talked about positive influences on the child's physical development, and 3 mothers thought the child had a good relationship with the staff or caregiver/s.

In general, the parents themselves tended to experience relatively few difficulties. Those mentioned were: time pressures and centre hours (2 mothers, 3 fathers); fees and financial difficulties (2 mothers, 1 father); social difficulties when trying to make friends at the early childhood centre (3 mothers); transport and travel difficulties (2 mothers); concern about an unsuitable caregiver or staff member (2 mothers); separation from the child (2 mothers); the "obnoxious" influence of other children on the child (1 mother); and waiting lists when wanting to enrol the child (1 father).

Very few of the young children had experienced any difficulties. Only 1 father recalled anything problematic, and this was the child's separating from the parent. Among the mothers, 3 mentioned the negative influences of other children, 2 remembered the child had difficulties separating from her/his parent, 2 commented that the child had found it difficult sharing with others, 2 said the child's emotional needs were not met, 1 mentioned an unsuitable caregiver, 1 remembered interrupted sleep patterns, and found that napkins were changed infrequently.

Early Childhood Education and Care from 2 to 3 Years

More children participated in early childhood education and care between the ages of 2 and 3 years. By this age playcentres, as well as playgroups, featured prominently. In total, 13 children (22%) attended playgroups, 12 (20%) were enrolled at playcentre, 10 (17%) at childcare centres, 3 (5%) were in family daycare, 2 were at a kohanga reo, 1 was at a Samoan language nest, 4 were attending kindergarten, 2 attended a private preschool (Montessori), 1 used a mobile kindergarten, and 1 was at a church-based early childhood group. In addition to these services, 2 children had a full-time nanny.

Playcentres were the service most frequently used by 12 of the children, playgroups were most frequently used by 9 children, and childcare centres or creches by 9 children. In total, 44 (73%) of the children used an early childhood care and education service, 16 (27%) did not. Mothers of 2 of the 16 children classified as not enrolled with an early childhood service said that their children were involved in Sunday school and/or Sunday creches.

During that year, 9 children (15%) used more than 1 early childhood education and care service, usually concurrently, but consecutively in situations where families moved residence. One of the 2 children who used different arrangements sequentially moved from a childcare centre to family daycare, the other changed from a playgroup to a private preschool. Each of the 7 children involved in concurrent arrangements experienced 1 of these combinations: a childcare centre and a playcentre; a playgroup and a caregiver; a playgroup and a private kindergarten; 2 different playgroups; a playcentre and a playgroup; a playgroup and family daycare; and a kohanga reo and a kindergarten.

The benefits experienced by the adults in the family again included social benefits, which were mentioned by 21 mothers (36%) and 10 fathers (24%); time out from the child or time to spend with other children in the family, which was mentioned by 13 mothers (22%) and 3 fathers (7%); and having time for work or study while the child's needs were catered for, a priority for 5 mothers (8%) and 5 fathers (12%). One mother made these comments about having her toddler in family daycare while she was working 30 hours a week:

> As far as I was concerned he was well looked after. It was good from the point of view that if I knew I was going to be late it didn't matter. It didn't cost me as much (as the childcare centre). And I knew that if he was sick he could still go there ... and she could care for him, take him to the doctor and do all the wonderful things that I didn't do when I was there (at work).

Other benefits for the parents were: knowing the child's emotional needs were being met (9 mothers and 2 fathers); parent education and early childhood training (7 mothers and 2 fathers with children at playcentres); parent involvement with the children at the centre (3 mothers and 4 fathers); convenient transport arrangements or siting of the early childhood centre (2 mothers and 2 fathers); and language maintenance and cultural continuity (2 mothers with children at a kohanga reo).

Some parents appreciated their child's starting kindergarten before the age of 3 years, and they saw this as beneficial both for the adults in the family, and for the child:

> We looked forward to him going to kindy in the morning. His grandmother loved going up there. The teachers were very caring. (The child) looked forward to going. He enjoyed going to play with his friends. He likes learning. He loved learning shapes, colours, numbers; loved to play with scissors.

The parents continued to see the main benefits for their children as social benefits. They also thought it was important for the child to have a good relationship with staff or the caregiver, and to engage in learning and creative activities. The value of socialising with other children was mentioned by 33 mothers (56%) and 18 fathers (43%); contact with staff by 10 mothers (17%) and 2 fathers (5%); benefits related to cognitive development and learning activities by 7 mothers (12%) and 4 fathers (10%); language or verbal development by 4 mothers (7%) and 4 fathers (10%); and creative activities by 6 mothers (10%) and 1 father (2%). Other benefits for the children included having their emotional needs met (8 mothers, 4 fathers); Maori language maintenance (2 mothers); physical development and outdoor activities (3 mothers); and transition to school and independence (1 father).

Relatively few difficulties were encountered. Those experienced by parents were: social difficulties or feeling isolated from their own culture (4 mothers, 2 fathers); the early childhood centre's philosophy or politics (2 mother, 3 fathers); fees and financial problems (3 mothers); time pressures, conflicting work and parenting responsibilities, and the hours the centre was open (2 mothers and 2 fathers); parents having to stay with the child at the centre (2 mothers and 2 fathers); an unsuitable caregiver (1 couple); and transport and travel difficulties (1 couple).

Again, there appeared to be few difficulties for the child. These included: separating from the parent (mentioned by 4 mothers and 2 fathers); socialisation and making friends (4 mothers, 2 fathers); the child's not participating in group activities (2 mothers, 1 father); the child's dislike of sharing (1 couple); and having an unsuitable caregiver (1 mother, 2 fathers).

Early Childhood Education and Care from 3 to 4 Years

By age 3 to 4 years, the majority of the children were using an early childhood education and care service, and kindergartens were most frequently the type attended. In total, 36 (60%) of the children attended a kindergarten, 11 (18%) a playcentre, 8 (13%) a childcare centre, and 5 (8%) a playgroup. There were also 4 children at a private preschool, 3 at a kohanga reo, 3 in family daycare, 2 at church-based preschool groups, and 1 at a preschool attached to a school. In addition, 2 children had a nanny.

More than half of the children attended kindergarten most often (32 children, 53%). In total, 56 (93%) of the children used an early childhood service, and only 4 children (7%) did not.

During that year, 17 (28%) of the children participated in more than one type of early childhood care and education. Nine of these children moved from one service to another sequentially, with a trend of moving into kindergartens. The sequential moves included: from playcentre to kindergarten (3 children); from kohanga reo to kindergarten; from

childcare centre to kindergarten; from family daycare to kindergarten; from a childcare centre to family daycare; from a private kindergarten to a private preschool; and from playgroup to playcentre. Another 8 children concurrently participated in more than one service. These combinations were: a childcare centre and a kindergarten; a playgroup, a kindergarten, and a caregiver; a childcare centre and a kindergarten; 2 playcentres and a nanny; a family daycare centre and a kindergarten; a playgroup and a kindergarten; a childcare centre and a playgroup; and a playgroup, a private kindergarten, and a childcare centre.

The benefit most often experienced by parents whose 3-year-olds participated in early childhood care and education was having time out or time to spend with their other children. This benefit was mentioned by 29 (49%) of the mothers and 6 (14%) of the fathers. Secondly, knowing the child's emotional needs were being met was remembered as a positive aspect by 12 mothers and 11 fathers. Thirdly, having time to work while the child's needs were catered for was important for 8 mothers and 6 fathers, and having opportunities to socialise with other adults remained beneficial for 9 mothers and was also mentioned by 5 fathers. In addition, 5 mothers and 1 father found the parent education offered at the centre useful, 2 mothers and 1 father liked the amount of parent involvement with the children, 1 mother and 2 fathers made favourable comments about their transport arrangements, and again, 2 mothers spoke positively about their experiences of language maintenance and cultural continuity.

Parents continued to say that a major benefit for their child was social interaction with other children. Creative and learning activities were also seen as important benefits for 3-year-olds. Socialisation with other children was mentioned as a benefit by 39 (66%) of the mothers and 23 (55%) of the fathers; creative activities by 15 (25%) of the mothers and 11 (26%) of the fathers; and learning activities by 13 (22%) of the mothers and 12 (29%) of the fathers. Other benefits for the child were: being happy and having her/his emotional needs met (13 mothers, 7 fathers); preparation for, or transition to, the next step, morning kindergarten, or school (9 mothers and 5 fathers); having a good relationship with the teachers, staff, or caregiver (7 mothers and 2 fathers); language activities and development (6 mothers and 2 fathers); physical/motor development or outdoor activities (3 mothers and 4 fathers); and Maori language maintenance or cultural continuity (2 mothers and 1 father).

Access was a problem for some parents. Seven mothers and 6 fathers had transport or travel difficulties, and 3 mothers and 1 father talked about financial problems and difficulties paying the fees. Six mothers and 6 fathers described time pressures and difficulties related to their conflicting parenting and workplace demands and the early childhood centre's hours. Another 3 mothers and 1 father said that afternoon kindergarten was inconvenient for them. Five mothers and 1 father talked about how difficult it was knowing the child was unsettled and unhappy. Two mothers had problems with waiting lists and waiting to enrol the child, 2 with socialising and clashes with other adults at the centre, 1 thought a teacher was inappropriate, and 1 did not want to stay at playcentre with her child.

Again, there were relatively few difficulties for the children. The child's difficulties in separating from his/her parent were mentioned by 5 mothers and 3 fathers. Lack of transport

was mentioned by 5 mothers and 3 fathers, and lack of friends or socialising difficulties by 4 mothers and 4 fathers. Three mothers and 2 fathers remembered that afternoon kindergarten had interrupted their 3-year-old child's sleeping patterns. Four mothers and 3 fathers felt that physical needs were not catered for adequately because food or fluids were inadequate. One mother and 3 fathers thought there was insufficient structure in the programme, and 2 mothers and 1 father said the child had been bored or insufficiently stimulated.

Early Childhood Education and Care from 4 to 5 Years

Almost all of the children attended an early childhood education and care centre between the ages of 4 and 5 years. Only 1 mother reported that her child had not attended a centre. This mother chose to keep her child at home:

> No. Right through till 5, he never went to anything. They grow up too quick, leave home too quick. The first 5 years to me means a lot. I do the playing and the teaching at home. Even as far as playdough, dirt, and things outside.

However, of the 60 children, 59 (98%) were enrolled with an early childhood education and care service when they were aged 4 years. As Table 3 shows, at this age kindergarten was the prevalent form of service used, with 36 children (60%) most frequently attending a kindergarten. There was further evidence of multiple use of the early childhood services.

Parents of 20 (33%) of the children talked about their child's attending more than one type of early childhood service or other educational service, either concurrently or consecutively, during that year. Of these, 6 changes in the early childhood or other educational services used were sequential ones. Four of these sequential changes occurred because the children were admitted to schools before they turned 5 years of age (3 to an independent school, 1 to a state primary school). The other sequential moves occurred as a result of geographical location or change of residence: 1 child moved from kindergarten to the Correspondence School early childhood programme, and 1 child moved from a childcare centre in Auckland to a kindergarten in the greater Wellington region. The remaining 14 (23%) of the children with combined arrangements experienced concurrent use of more than one early childhood service, and kindergarten was often a partner in these concurrent combinations. The combinations included: a kindergarten and a childcare centre (5 children); a kindergarten and a family daycare arrangement (3 children); a playgroup and a kindergarten (1 child with a parent, 1 child accompanied by a nanny); a playcentre and a private preschool; a kindergarten and a caregiver arrangement; a creche and a kindergarten; and a Samoan language nest and a kindergarten.

During this period there were 2 main benefits for the parents. Having time out or time to spend with their other children was mentioned by 23 mothers (39%) and 14 fathers (33%). Knowing their 4-year-old child's emotional and learning needs were being met was identified as a benefit by 22 mothers (37%) and 11 fathers (26%).

In addition, 8 mothers (14%), who were all engaged in full-time or part-time paid work or

study, and 6 fathers (14%) commented on having time for paid work or study while the child's needs were being catered for. Other benefits for parents included: socialising with other adults (4 mothers and 5 fathers), cultural and language continuity (4 mothers), parent involvement with the children (3 mothers and 1 father), convenient siting of the centre or ease of travel arrangements (3 mothers and 2 fathers), and parent education and involvement on the committee (1 mother and 1 father).

Again, parents thought the main benefit for their children had been socialising with other children. This was mentioned as a benefit by 32 mothers (55%) and 21 fathers (50%). In addition, 15 mothers (26%) and 8 fathers (19%) made comments about benefits related to learning or cognitive development, and 10 mothers (17%) and 5 fathers (12%) talked about useful preparation for school. These comments on transition, socialisation, and learning were typical:

> I think it got him ready for school, as he had to get himself organised in the morning, get out the door at an early time. He really enjoyed all the other kids and the teachers. Different experiences, a few trips, they studied things at kindy - he learned quite a bit.
> (Mother)

Other good things about the children's early childhood care experiences at this age were: creative activities (6 mothers, 5 fathers), language development (7 mothers, 3 fathers), and physical development and related indoor and outdoor activities (5 mothers and 4 fathers). Another 4 mothers and 1 father talked about Maori or Samoan language and cultural maintenance: "He learned a lot more of the (Samoan) language". A few parents made positive comments about the continuity of attending playcentre from birth to 5 years: "He was able to spend right till 5 (years of age) at playcentre".

More mothers than fathers spoke about benefits concerned with children's emotional needs (16 mothers, 28%; 3 fathers, 7%), and with the child's relationship with staff (9 mothers, 16%; 3 fathers, 7%). From age 4 to 5 years, then, socialising with peers was still seen as the main benefit, but transition to school was also more likely to be mentioned.

Again, the parents experienced few difficulties. Transport or travel were mentioned most frequently (by 8 mothers and 6 fathers) and financial or cost-related problems (5 mothers and 1 father). Several mothers said that it was a problem not owning a car, not being able to drive, or having to walk a long way to the centre. A few of the other families using combined concurrent care said this involved travelling longer distances. Some parents commented regretfully on how financial problems limited the child's access to early childhood education and care:

> He missed a lot of classes because we had a lot of financial problems. We didn't know how to budget and that. It was terrible for us, we were under pressure and I didn't want to take him down (to the early childhood centre). It's a shame that he missed a lot. The same with my other kids ...

Table 3

Early Childhood Centres Attended by the Children between Ages 4 and 5 Years

Type of Early Childhood Centre	Children Who Attended N	Service Attended Most Often N	(%)
Kindergarten	41	36	(60)
Playcentre	8	6	(10)
Private preschool	6	5	(8)
Childcare centre	7	2	(3)
Kohanga reo	3	2	(3)
Independent primary school	3	2	(3)
Samoan language nest	1	1	(2)
Primary school	1	1	(2)
Correspondence School (Early Childhood)	1	1	(2)
Preschool (unspecified) attached to school	1	1	(2)
Church preschool	2	1	(2)
Playgroup	2	0	(0)
Family daycare	3	1	(2)
No early childhood centre attended	1	1	(2)
Total	80	60	(101)*

Note: One child at playcentre, and another child who went both to playgroup and kindergarten, were also in the care of a nanny. Among the children at a private preschool, 4 specified Montessori. * Percentage totals more than 100 as a result of rounding.

A few parents, who said their concern was based on their own experience or on their voluntary work with victims of family violence, described cuts in Social Welfare subsidised childcare as "a tragedy".

Other concerns included: time pressures due to hours of opening and conflicting workplace and parenting demands (6 fathers and 3 mothers), and knowing the child was unhappy or unsettled (3 mothers and 1 father).

Parents described few difficulties for their children. However, 5 fathers (12%) and 5 mothers (9%) thought their child was bored and there was insufficient stimulation for this age group. Examples of comments made by parents who remembered their children being less settled as 4-year-olds in early childhood centres were:

> He got bored though. He was very advanced for his age. So those last 6 months were a drag at kindy. He should have gone to school then, eh? (to husband, who agrees). At about 4 years and 1 month. He was so ready for it.
> (Mother)

> There were big changes. He was getting too old for it (playcentre). He just couldn't wait to get to school and we couldn't wait for him to get to school either. He was just a bit irritable because he wanted to go to school.
> (Father)

Socialisation problems and lack of friends were mentioned by 6 mothers and 3 fathers, who said their child missed her/his older friends who had moved on to school. Another 3 fathers and 2 mothers thought there was insufficient structure or "discipline" at the centre. Isolation or lack of transport affected 3 children whose mothers expressed concern either about the long walk to the early childhood centre, or about the lack of socialising with other children while receiving early childhood education through Correspondence School.

Care, Learning, and Reading at Home at Age 5 Years

Care of Sick Children

During the first 5 years of the children's lives, their mothers tended to care for them when they were unwell. In 43 families the mother, whether she was in paid work or not, usually cared for the child when he/she was ill; in 6 families the mother and father shared this responsibility; in 3 families the mother and grandparents shared the responsibility; in 2 families both parents and the grandparents shared the care; in 2 families the father was mainly responsible; in 2 the grandmother was responsible; in 1 family the paid caregiver and the parents shared the care; and 1 child had been cared for mainly by health professionals and hospitals when ill.

After the children started school, the pattern of care remained similar, with 43 (72%) of the families reporting that the mother cared for the 5-year-old child when he/she was unwell, and

7 (12%) of the families saying that both parents were equally responsible. Another 3 mothers shared the care with the child's grandparents, 3 parents were jointly responsible with a paid caregiver or nanny, 2 fathers took on the main responsibility, 2 grandmothers had the main responsibility, and 2 children tended to be admitted to hospital and in care of health professionals.

For most parents, these arrangements were satisfactory. However, 7 mothers and 3 fathers found that the arrangements had not worked out well. One mother, who shared the care of her sick children with their grandmother, said:

> It was tough. I had to work my job roster around it. His father had to change his shift too.

Before-School, After-School, and Holiday Care

In over half of the families, the mother usually cared for the child before school, but in another third of the families, fathers regularly shared this responsibility. More precisely, in 35 families (59%), the mother was usually responsible for the child before school started in the morning; in 16 families (27%), the mother and father shared the before-school care equally; in 3 families (5%), the father was usually responsible; in 2 families, the parent/s and grandparent/s shared the care before school; in 2 families a neighbour usually cared for the child before school; in 1 family the grandparents were mainly responsible; and in 1 family the parent/s and the nanny shared the before-school care.

Almost all of the fathers and most of the mothers thought these arrangements worked out well or were satisfactory. For 34 (58%) of the mothers and 21 (50%) of the fathers, the before-school arrangements were working out well or "fine"; and for 20 mothers (34%) and 16 fathers (38%) they were all right or okay. Only 4 mothers and 1 father said their before school arrangements were not working well, and the problems mentioned invariably concerned time pressures and conflicting workplace and parenting demands. These comments came from a mother who worked and was usually the person responsible for caring for her children before school:

> It's a bit of a problem when I'm working and it's just a rush, because (partner's) had a busy year as well, and he's been away a lot and working on ... which means he has been working odd hours. And I've done a few jobs where I've been working odd hours. So it's just a matter of having to be very organised.

After-school care was usually the mother's responsibility, or the responsibility of both parents equally. In 36 families (61%), the mother cared for the child after school; in 12 families (20%) the after-school care was shared equally by the parents; and in another 2 families the father was mainly responsible. Other non-parental arrangements were: in 3 families a paid caregiver or nanny usually cared for the child after school; in 2 families the child's grandparents did the after-school care; in 2 families the parent/s and grandparents were equally responsible; in 2 the older siblings were responsible; and a neighbour cared for 1 of the children. In the 2 families where a parent said that the child's brothers or sisters looked

after the 5-year-old child after school, the siblings concerned were considerably older (aged 16 or 17 years).

In the main, the parents were finding that their after-school care arrangements were working out fairly well too. Thirty-eight (64%) of the mothers and 25 (59%) of the fathers said that the after-school care arrangements were working out well or "fine"; and for 18 mothers (31%) and 11 fathers (26%) they were all right or okay. However, a rushed pace resulting from conflicts between work and family responsibilities affected some parents, and 2 mothers and 3 fathers described these difficulties.

Holiday care arrangements showed similar patterns, but there was more involvement of grandparents and members of the extended family. In 30 families (50%) the mother expected to be caring for the child during the summer (Christmas) school holidays; in 11 (19%) of the families the parents intended to share the childcare; in 3 (5%) of the families, the father planned to care for the child most of the time; in 8 (14%) of the families the parents and grandparents would be involved, and in another 2 families the grandparents would be mostly responsible; in 2 families, the parent/s and the nanny expected to share the childcare; in 2 cases all the adults in the family, including the aunts, uncles, and grandparents were involved; and 2 couples mentioned that their child was attending a school holiday programme.

Learning and Reading at Home

Observational studies of 5-year-old children have shown that reading or literacy tasks are learning activities experienced frequently during the first months in many school classrooms in the Wellington and Auckland regions (e.g., Podmore, 1978; Clay, 1985; McDonald, Clarke, & Kidman, 1991). The reading books provided by most schools, and brought home by children, remain potentially one of the main learning activities involving parents and linking homes and schools during children's first months at school. Recently, Cathy Wylie (1994b) reported that "parents' most regular source of knowledge about their child's progress is what comes home in the schoolbag". She found that schoolbags of 5-year-old children continue to contain their reading books throughout the first year of school (Wylie, 1994b, p.1).

As in Gay Ochiltree's (1991) Australian research, which included retrospective interviews of mothers with 5-year-old children, in this study we asked the parents who helped the 5-year-old child with his/her school work, for example reading at home. There was no underlying assumption that the child ought to be able to read, or that reading was the one important learning activity at home. We used the example of reading at home as something likely to be within the range of experience of many participants, given that the reading books still tend to be brought home.

Compared with any of the other care and education arrangements, reading at home was more of a shared activity within the 2-parent families. In 29 (49%) of the families, both the mother and father helped their child with reading or school work; in 21 (36%) of the families the mother was mainly responsible; and in another 4 (7%) of the families, it was mainly the

father who read with the child. In 6 (10%) of the families, the older siblings were also involved. Other people who helped with children's reading at home were: grandparent/s (1 family), parent/s and grandparent/s (1 family), the paid caregiver/nanny (1 family), parent/s and paid caregiver/nanny (1 family), and other/professionals ("the teacher helps" the child and the family). These findings provide further information on gender roles within the families. They suggest that in 2-parent families, helping with reading at home tended not to be seen as the responsibility solely of mothers.

When we asked how helping the child with reading at home was working out for the parent (or for the person/people helping), most parents made fairly positive comments. There were 24 mothers (41%) and 15 fathers (16%) who said it was "fine" or "good"; another 6 mothers (10%) and 11 fathers (26%) said it was going well and that both the parent/s and the child enjoyed reading/books; and for 16 mothers (28%) and 3 (7%) fathers it was all right, okay, or there were no problems.

Some parents said that reading at home was not going so well from their perspective, because the parent helping was not very patient (4 mothers and 2 fathers). Other difficulties were: fitting in the 5-year-old's reading activities with the needs of the child's siblings or with the child/ren's routines (3 mothers, 1 father); or the parent being worried about child's progress (1 mother). For some parents (3 mothers and 5 fathers) long working hours prevented regular involvement with the child's learning activities in the evenings. As one father, who said his child's reading at home was "good", explained:

> The only thing is, the difficulty maybe - they (the children) don't understand we have to work in the evenings. There's no time - they don't understand. They try to get attention from us ... We don't spend enough time with them after school. It's a problem, because with other families the parents would see them a longer time before they go to bed, after they come back after school. Whereas we have to work at the shop after school.

There were 3 mothers who were learning to read while helping their children: 1 was aiming to become literate, and 2 were learning to read in English. Another 4 families said that reading at home was not really relevant because their children were not yet formally/officially learning to read.

Most parents thought that reading at home was working out well in terms of the child's motivation (interpreted here as endogenous motivation or interest in the task), or the child's progress (as observed by the parent or communicated by the teacher to the parent). Mothers were more likely to mention the child's motivation and enjoyment of reading, whereas among the fathers, almost equal numbers talked about the child's achievement/progress or about motivation. In total, 27 mothers (47%) and 14 fathers (33%) said that it was going well because the child was interested, the child enjoyed reading, liked books, or found it exciting. For example, when asked how reading at home was working out, this mother focused on her child's motivation:

> Well she's so keen. She wants to do it as soon as she comes home from

school. Keen as anything. She'll sit there - she's interested in it. She tries so hard.

Another 18 mothers (31%) and 15 fathers (36%) commented that the child was progressing well, learning well, or achieving. Other parents, 8 mothers and 5 fathers, said reading at home was working out well or fine (unspecified); and 5 mothers and 3 fathers said it was working out okay, and was all right for the child.

However, some parents expressed concerns. Their concern tended to be either about the child's enjoyment/interest/motivation, "being easily distracted", "giving up", or being "reluctant" (3 mothers, 1 father); or about the child's ability or progress (2 mothers, 1 father). One mother mentioned that her child was too tired to do any further reading after school. Another mother talked about bilingual matters, and the importance of trying to maintain their own language at home. The child's reading books were written in English, which was not consistent with the parent's policy of using spoken and written Samoan in the home.

Summary

Caring for the children before they started school appeared to be primarily the responsibility of the mothers. In just a few of the families, the father had been the person with most responsibility for the child's care during the first 5 years. In addition, 5 couples thought they had shared the care equally, and 5 of the women said that the child's grandparents had been the main caregivers. Informal care arrangements most often involved grandparents or other members of the extended family/whanau.

From birth to 1 year of age, 23 (38%) of the children participated in organised early childhood education and care arrangements. Playgroups were mentioned most frequently when the children were aged under 1 year, playcentre and childcare centres began to be used more often when the children were aged over 1 or 2 years, and among 4-year-olds, kindergartens were the type of service most frequently used. By the age of 4 years, 59 (98%) of the children experienced one or more of the early childhood education and care services. The number of families concurrently using more than one early childhood education and care service also increased each year.

There were some consistent themes from birth up to 5 years of age. Throughout this period, the benefits of early childhood education and care for parents and children usually concerned socialising and socialisation. By the age of 2 years, creative and learning activities were also mentioned as benefits for the children. When the children were aged 4 years, their parents' comments about the benefits of early childhood care and education showed some similar patterns to those made about their experiences when the child was younger, but preparation for school was also often mentioned. Some parents with children at playcentres said that parent education/playcentre training was of benefit to them. Several families involved with the local kohanga reo or Samoan language nest found the important benefits were cultural and language maintenance.

Difficulties discussed sometimes concerned aspects of socialising. Other major difficulties for some parents concerned access. Both travel or transport to the early childhood centre, and fees or financial considerations, were difficulties experienced by families. The experiences of some of the families who were involved with kindergartens when their children were 3 years of age suggest that the afternoon scheduling of hours was sometimes inconvenient in terms of children's sleeping patterns and parents' domestic routines.

Mothers were often responsible for caring for their children when they were sick, before school, after school, and in the holidays. In some 2-parent families, parents took on these responsibilities jointly, and just a few fathers were solely responsible. Grandparents and members of the extended family were sometimes involved, and they were more frequently mentioned in the plans for school holiday care.

Within the 2-parent families, reading and learning activities at home were more likely to be a shared responsibility. Most parents thought that reading at home was working out fairly well in terms of their child's motivation or achievement and progress. Mothers were more likely to talk about the child's motivation. Some working parents discussed the time pressures they experienced.

Chapter 4

PARENTS' PAID WORK, STUDY, AND VOLUNTARY WORK

This chapter describes the current occupations of the participating adults; their patterns of paid work, study, and voluntary work during the child's first 5 years; and their related experiences and views.

Parents' Occupations

Occupational data were coded using the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations 1990 (Department of Statistics, 1992a). Unlike earlier census classifications this revised version, which was used in the 1991 census, "defines major occupation groups using the skills required rather than the type of work performed" (Statistics New Zealand, 1993, p.43). The New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations system was selected because it was the most up-to-date classification of types of occupations available and therefore catered for recent changes in occupational types.

The current occupational profiles for the participating women and men, who all have 5-year-old children, are presented in Table 4. This table also shows national profiles from the 1991 census data, excluding people aged over 59 years to improve the comparability.

Compared with the national profile, men in the present sample show higher percentages for these occupational groups: legislators, administrators, managers; and technicians and associate professionals. The latter percentage appears partly attributable to the relatively large number of men employed as computer consultants in the Wellington sample. The women in the present sample include a higher percentage of service and sales workers, which seems consistent with a trend among some of the mothers of 5-year-old children to seek casual part-time work, often in the service area.

Patterns of Paid Work among Parents

In this study, 39 (67%) of the mothers and 41 (98%) of the fathers had spent some time in the paid workforce during their child's first 5 years of life. We asked the parents about their occupations and hours worked on a year-by-year basis. In this report, full-time work is defined as 30 or more hours per week, and part-time work as less than 30 hours per week, in accordance with current conventions in census analyses (Department of Statistics, 1992b, p.20).

Table 4

Occupational Profile of the Participating Families, Compared with Profile from the 1991 Census

Occupational group	Participating Families		1991 Census Data	
	% males	% females	% males	% females
Legislators, administrators, managers	19.0	3.4	10.1	4.9
Professionals	4.8	3.4	7.1	8.4
Technicians and associate professionals	28.5	8.5	8.2	5.9
Clerks	2.4	11.9	3.3	15.5
Service and sales workers	9.5	18.6	6.3	10.5
Agriculture and fisheries	9.5	3.4	8.3	3.6
Trades workers	9.5	0.0	13.2	0.9
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	2.4	1.7	9.6	2.9
Elementary occupations	4.8	5.0	6.1	3.2
Not adequately defined	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.8
Unemployed and seeking work	4.8	6.8	8.7	7.0
Not in labour force	4.8	37.3	18.1	36.4

Note:
Participating families: males N = 42; females N = 59.
1991 census data: males N = 1,262,082; females N = 1,328,202 (N.Z. residents aged 15-59 years).

Workforce Participation during the Child's First 5 Years

When the children were aged under 1 year, 18 (31%) of their mothers were in paid work. Another 41 (69%) of the women did not undertake any paid work during this period. Most of the women worked part time with their hours averaging from 1 to 25 per week. Only 6 women (10% of the women interviewed) worked full time during their child's first year. Of these, 1 worked 31 hours, and the hours for the remaining 5 ranged from 37 to 40 hours per week. Altogether, the women were engaged in a range of types of occupations, but the most prevalent during this period were clerks (6 women, 10%) and service and sales workers (4 women, 7%).

In contrast, most of the men were in paid employment during the children's first year, and their hours were clearly somewhat longer. When the children were aged under 1 year, at least 38 (90%) of their father were in paid work. Only 1 of the men was not in paid work, and another 1 was seeking work. Most of the men worked full time: 2 for 30 hours, 1 for 32 hours, and the hours for the others ranged from 37 to 75 hours per week. There were 15 men (36%) who remembered working an average of over 50 hours per week when they had a child aged under 1 year. Only 1 father worked part time, for 20 hours per week. On the whole, the types of occupations in which the men were engaged showed a similar pattern to their occupations when their children were aged 5 years (see Table 4). However, at this earlier stage, a slightly higher percentage of the fathers were trades workers and a slightly lower percentage were legislators, administrators, or managers.

During the year the children were aged 1 to 2 years, there was a very slight increase in the number of women working, and a more marked increase in the number of hours they spent in paid work. At this stage, 23 (40%) of the women participated in the paid workforce. Another 34 (58%) were not in the paid workforce, and 1 was seeking work. Many of the women still worked part time, with their hours now ranging from 6 to 24 per week. Eight women (14% of the those interviewed) worked full time when their child was aged 1 to 2 years. One of these women worked 30 hours, and the hours of the remaining women who worked full time now ranged from 38 up to 55 hours per week. Among the female participants who were in paid work at this point, the types of occupations showed a profile similar to the pattern presented in Table 4.

In that year when the children were aged 1 to 2 years, there was a slight increase in the number of men who were **not** in the workforce. This finding is consistent with the trend in New Zealand in the late 1980s and early 1990s towards higher unemployment rates. Although men aged 25 to 54 years had higher participation rates in the labour force than older and younger men, by 1991 "labour force participation had declined to a post war low of 88.6 percent" for this group of men (Krishnan, Hunter, & Goodger, 1992, p.7). The children in this study were born in 1988, and were aged 1 to 2 years between 1989 and 1990. In the year they were aged 1 to 2 years, 3 (7%) of the men were not involved in any paid work, and another 2 (4.8%) were seeking work. Most of the men still worked full time. Of these, 1 worked 30 hours, 1 worked 32 hours, and the hours per week reported for the remainder ranged from 37 to 75 hours. There were 16 men (38%) who worked, on average,

over 50 hours per week. Again just 1 father worked part time, for 20 hours per week. The types of occupations remained similar on the whole, but the percentage of men who were legislators, administrators, or managers rose to 19%.

When the children were aged 2 to 3 years, 26 (44%) of their mothers were in paid work, 32 (54%) were not in paid work, and 1 was seeking employment. The range of part-time hours worked remained the same at 6 to 24 per week. Nine (15%) of the women worked full time, with 2 working 30 hours and the hours for the other 7 ranging from 38 to 68 hours per week. Only 2 women worked over 50 hours per week. Among those who worked, over all the types of work remained relatively unchanged.

During this period when the children were aged 2 to 3 years, the men's patterns of work were relatively unchanged. There were 2 men not in the workforce, and 1 seeking paid work. All but 1 of the men still worked full time, 1 for 30 hours, 1 for 32 hours, and the hours for the remainder ranged from 38 to 80 hours. The main change for that year was that the number of fathers working over 50 hours per week increased to 19 (45% of those interviewed). Furthermore, there were 5 fathers (12%) working 70 hours or more a week, and 2 of these (4.8%) worked 80 hours per week.

The patterns of paid work for mothers of children aged 3 to 4 years remained relatively stable, with 25 (42%) in paid work, 33 (56%) not in paid work, and 1 seeking employment. Individual cases showed that some women had moved into the workforce that year, but others had left work to have another child. The number of part-time hours worked ranged from 6 to 20 hours per week. There were 7 women (12%) working full time, and their hours ranged from 35 to 50 hours per week. Only 1 mother worked 50 hours per week.

The fathers' patterns of work also remained relatively stable during this period, with 2 men not in the workforce and 1 seeking paid work. There were 2 men working part time, 1 for 6 hours per week, and 1 for 20 hours per week. Among those working full time, 1 worked 32 hours, 1 worked 35 hours, and the hours per week for the others ranged for 38 to 70 hours. The number of fathers working over 50 hours per week dropped to 14 (33%) of those interviewed. In the year when the children were aged from 3 to 4 years, the fathers' types of work remained stable.

By the time the children were aged 4 to 5 years, a few more of the women had moved into the paid workforce. There were 28 (47%) of the women in paid work, 30 (51%) not in paid work, and 1 seeking work. A wide range of part-time hours was reported at this stage, varying from 1 to 25 hours per week. The number of mothers working full time had risen to 11 (19% of the women interviewed), with 2 working 30 hours, and the remainder from 37 to 65 hours per week. There were 2 mothers working an average of more than 50 hours weekly.

Most of the fathers we interviewed were still working full time when their children were aged 4 to 5 years. There were 2 who were not in the paid workforce, and another 2 who were seeking work. Only 1 father, who was a full-time student, worked part-time and his hours of paid work averaged 4 per week. The majority of the men were therefore in full-

time paid work, 1 man for 32 hours, and the others from 35 to 70 hours weekly. There were still 14 (33%) of the fathers working 50 or more hours per week.

When their children were aged 5 years and attending school, that is, at the time of the interviews, there was an increase in the mothers' participation in the paid workforce. By this stage, 33 (56%) of the women were in paid work, 22 (37%) were not in paid work, and 4 were seeking work. Among the women, there was a range of part-time hours worked per week (from 1 to 25 hours). There were still 11 (19%) of the mothers working full time, and their hours ranged from 32 to 65 hours per week. Just 2 mothers continued to work more than 50 hours weekly. The pattern for the fathers remained fairly similar to the previous year, with 2 not in the workforce, and 2 seeking work. However, 5 fathers were now working part time, from 4 to 20 hours per week. The hours of those in full-time paid work ranged from 30 to 70, and the number of men working over 50 hours per week increased to 16 (38%). A few parents (2 fathers, 1 mother) were full-time students.

As well as collecting information about the type of work in which the parents of the 5-year-old children were engaged (see Table 4), we took note of how many were on shift work and the extent of self employment. Self-employment was more prevalent among the fathers of 5-year-olds, with 11 (26%) of the fathers self-employed and 3 (5%) of the mothers self-employed. A few parents doing freelance work were unable to specify regular average hours worked per week, for example a father said his weekly average ranged from "0 to 120 hours". Equal percentages of the men and the women did shift work. There were 7 women (12%) doing night shift or shift work to fit in with caring for the family, and 5 men (12%) were on shift work.

Experiences and Perceptions of Paid Work

A few participants who were seeking work commented on their experiences. In addition, the family members who were currently in paid work discussed their levels of satisfaction with their hours and conditions of work. Information was also gathered about the benefits and difficulties of being in the paid workforce while having young children, and about gender-related experiences and perceptions regarding parents' participation in the workforce.

Experiences of Seeking Paid Work

Comments from 2 of the fathers seeking work suggested that it was difficult for them, either because the positions offered were short term with recurring redundancies, or because English language fluency was a problem. Among the 4 mothers looking for paid work, finding appropriate hours was difficult, and 2 mothers found that lack of qualifications or experience was also problematic. One of the mothers applying for work said it was off-putting not hearing back from employers about the outcome of job applications.

Hours and Conditions when Working

Clearly, from the patterns described, some parents worked relatively long hours during their children's first 5 years and after the children started school. This trend was pronounced for about a third of the fathers throughout the first 5 years, and for a few mothers after their children had reached 1 year of age.

When asked how satisfied they were about their hours of work, most of the mothers in paid employment were reasonably satisfied: 20 (35%) were satisfied, 8 (14%) said their hours were all right or inevitable, but 7 (12%) were not satisfied. The remainder were unsure or not working.

There was more dissatisfaction among the fathers about their hours: 13 (31%) were satisfied, 11 (26%) thought the hours were all right, but 14 (34%) were not satisfied, and the remaining 4 (9%) were not in paid work. In addition, 17 (41%) of the fathers said that their family or whanau were dissatisfied with their hours. In several cases this reflected the long hours some fathers were working.

Nine fathers (21%) and 1 mother (2%) commented that they spent too long at work and not enough time with the family. In contrast, 2 fathers (5%) and 7 mothers (12%) were concerned that because their hours were too short, they were bringing in insufficient income to support the family.

On the whole, most parents were satisfied with the type of work they were doing, although 3 fathers (7%) and 4 mothers (6%) were not satisfied. Similarly, most were satisfied with their working conditions, but 5 fathers (12%) and 2 mothers (3%) were dissatisfied. The difficulties mentioned in regard to working conditions included thermal discomfort, other physical discomfort, and dissatisfaction with work-related travel.

Some parents on shift work found the experience very tiring, especially the mothers who worked at night and catered for the families' needs by day. Other parents described their hours as well suited to fitting in with the family, for example a father who worked a 40-hour week with early shifts starting at 4 a.m. said:

> Excellent. I love it. I'm an engine driver - we work around the clock but as a lot of guys don't like doing the early shifts I work the early shifts all the time.

When asked how satisfied his family/whanau were with his hours, he replied:

> Well, it works out good, like I get to spend a lot of time with my kids. I'm very lucky in that a lot of my friends in 9 to 5 jobs don't. I do.

For parents in the public service, one of the less satisfying aspects of the hours worked was a recent increase in hours. As a result of restructuring in the workplace, some were bringing more work home:

> I wish I didn't have to do the extra hours at home but it's a sign of the times these days. You're expected to carry a greater workload because there's a reduction in staff. You're not expected to keep staff numbers up, but existing staff are expected to carry the extra workload, unfortunately. And it's a sign of the times, we're stuck with it.

When asked how satisfied his family were about his hours of work (currently averaging 45 hours per week), this father replied:

> (Partner's name) gets a bit disgruntled with having me having to bring work home because it's time that I'm not spending with her and the children really, that I have to spend alone with myself, although I must admit I only do my extra work after the children have gone to bed.

One of the fathers in the computing field, who had worked 80 hours a week during his child's second year of life, found there were few benefits of being in paid work and having a young child:

> They don't actually go together - there are none. Young children demand attention, paid work demands attention, there's a fine line between the two - there wasn't enough time for me to spend with (child's name) in the first 3 years of his life - which was a pretty traumatic time for everybody. One of the advantages about being in paid work is that you have money to be able to do things, which is quite important.

The interviewers also reported a possible link between some fathers' long hours and their greater difficulty with recalling their children's first 5 years of early childhood experiences.

Benefits of Being in Paid Work

Parents identified one of the main benefits of "being in paid work and having a young child" as having an income. In total 53 parents, 27 (64%) of the fathers and 26 (45%) of the mothers, talked about financial benefits. Their comments included:

> I haven't experienced not having work or not having an income, so it's just a flow-on effect, it's got advantages as well, you're not going to be short of anything. If a book is required, it is given. We don't go overboard as far as that goes - try and teach (the child) that you've got to earn some of these things rather than just give them.
> (Father, main income earner in the family)

> Benefits? Ability to pay the bills. I wanted to be independent - earn my own money to get things for the children. You just can't rely on husbands.
> (Mother, main income earner in the family)

Although 20 (34%) of the mothers talked about interest in the work as a benefit, only 1 (2%) of the fathers mentioned this.

Other good things identified were: the child benefits from having breaks from the parent (8 mothers, 14%; 1 father, 2%); self-esteem and self-confidence (5 mothers, 9%; 2 fathers, 5%); the parent's sanity or wellbeing, having breaks from the child (2 mothers, 3%; 4 fathers, 10%); being self-employed and having flexibility (2 mothers, 3%; 4 fathers, 10%); returning home to the family after work (2 mothers and 2 fathers); having a good employer (1 mother, 1 father); and the child benefits from visiting the workplace (1 mother, 1 father).

A few benefits were mentioned only by women. These were: having contact with adults (8 mothers); receiving helpful support from their partners (5 mothers); and the child's having time to spend with the other parent (2 mothers). The benefits discussed only by fathers were: being able to relate to workmates with children (1 father); and the child's experiencing overseas travel resulting from the parent's work (1 father). In addition, 2 fathers said that there were few problems for working fathers (unlike working mothers), and 1 father said he had different values regarding the benefits of work and talked about his religious values.

Difficulties with Being in Paid Work

Time pressures, and missing out on time with their children, were difficulties for the parents who had worked during the child's first 5 years. Fathers more frequently said that missing out on time with their children was a difficulty (14 fathers, 29%; 7 mothers, 12%), and that missing out on the child's school activities was unfortunate (4 fathers, 1 mother).

> Too long hours sometimes; not being able to go and watch them (the children) and see what they are doing. They always put things on at the wrong time - 4 p.m.- an art display in the (school) hall, something like that. I never get to see anything like that because it's all gone by 5 p.m. It's a pity, and you can't get away (from work). Kindy was the same.
> (Father)

Mothers more often mentioned that time pressures were a difficulty (14 mothers, 24%; 7 fathers, 17%):

> Time. Time is a factor, and as the time gets shorter, avoiding stress, the stress of getting to places in time.
> (Mother)

Mothers were also more likely to encounter these difficulties: fitting in the household tasks (8 mothers, 14%; 1 father, 2%); guilt or worry about not being home with the child (7 mothers, 12%; 3 fathers, 7%); finding appropriate childcare (7 mothers, 12%; 2 fathers, 5%); getting organised and out of the house (6 mothers, no fathers); and taking time off for sick children (4 mothers, no fathers). This mother's experiences and views illustrate the connection between parental workforce participation and childcare arrangements, and the impact of the economic context and employment policies on families' choices:

> The caregiver arrangements can be quite difficult. The way I see the workforce at the moment, I wouldn't be able to take off time to look after sick children like I could then (3 years ago). It's a different ball game really, just not many employers happy to put up with things like that now. That's a very real difficulty now - that's the childcare side of it. I think the childcare situation too. At the end of their care you obviously know them (the family daycare provider) very well, but in the beginning, you hardly know the person. And pressure from in-laws: "you should be home with your child"...
> (Mother)

Financial difficulties and not having enough income were mentioned by 7 fathers and 3 mothers. More fathers said that having insufficient time to support their partner's activities was a difficulty (5 fathers, no mothers); or that there were no difficulties for working fathers (7 fathers, no mothers).

Views on Mothers of Young Children Working

There was a very wide range of views on mothers of young children being in paid work. Some parents were very positive, some were fairly neutral, some sympathised, and some were opposed.

Seven (12%) of the women and 10 (24%) of the men made strongly supportive statements. For example a father commented:

> Good on them. That's what I say. If they want to work, good on them.

For another 10 mothers (17%) and 11 fathers (26%) it was all right for mothers of young children to be working. Their comments included: "okay", "I don't have any worries about mothers of young children working", and "not a problem".

Among the parents who definitely approved, 2 fathers and 1 mother said that being in full-time paid work made mothers appreciate that it was hard work. Another 7 mothers and 3 fathers had found that it was easier if one or other parent was at home, but emphasised that it could be either parent. Flexibility was important to some parents, and a few (3 mothers and 1 father) said that from their experience, the flexibility of self-employment was good for working mothers with young children.

One theme was clearly prevalent. Concern about financial circumstances was expressed by 34 (58%) of the mothers and 17 (40%) of the fathers. Many of these parents said that working was a financial necessity. Mothers whose partners were unable to find paid employment commented regretfully that they had to take on paid work to meet their families' basic needs in the short term:

> Only thing is that I need the money for them to buy clothes, support school, buy shoes, something like that.

Other mothers, who also said that it was necessary for them to be in the paid workforce for financial reasons, spoke regretfully about longer term planning:

> Basically these days I think it's a lot more financial need. You've got to save for their education, you've got to save for their medical bills, you've got to save for your retirement. Now, somewhere along the line you've got to have some money to do all this. So the only way is a second income.

The economic context was clearly a predominant factor influencing more than half of the parents' views on mothers of young children working.

Another reason given for mothers' return to the workforce was the problem of feeling isolated at home. This was mentioned by 9 mothers and 1 father who supported mothers being in paid work. Also sympathetic were 9 mothers and 1 father who had experienced or observed the overload, stress, or guilt of working mothers who had small children.

Some parents said their approval depended on the number of hours worked. For 8 mothers and 4 fathers, part-time paid work was fine, but full-time hours were less acceptable. Another 11 (19%) of the mothers and 8 (19%) of the fathers commented that childcare was important. They were supportive of mothers working provided that good quality childcare arrangements were accessible.

Several parents (7 mothers and 1 father) who were more ambivalent about mothers being in paid employment specified the age the child should reach before her/his mother resumed paid work. One father, who had earlier made fairly positive comments about his own child's attendance at a childcare centre between the ages of 1 and 3 years, said:

> I think that mothers should be at home with their children, in cases where there is a financial environment where they don't need to work. Sure there are cases where a woman has to work, where their husbands are not working or on a low income. But in my case I would prefer my wife to be at home to do the things that my children need ... from under 3 they should be at home. When they are at kindy women should be able to go back to work if they want, but to be home when the children come home - to me that is your responsibility.

Also included here were 4 mothers and 1 father who commented that they were not happy about mothers working if they had a child aged under 5 years, and 3 mothers who specified that the child should be 10 years of age.

Unqualified or definite disapproval was expressed by 6 parents (6%), 4 fathers and 2 mothers. Their comments included: "No I don't like it", "personally I don't think it's a good thing", "sometimes that's where some of the problems with children start", "children go off the rails", "they're crazy ... I feel sorry for the kids".

Views on Fathers of Young Children Working

Views on fathers' participation in paid work also showed considerable diversity. Some thought it was an obligation, others talked about options, and a few said it was difficult to get jobs.

On the one hand, 18 parents (8 fathers, 19%; 10 mothers, 17%) stressed unconditionally the obligation of fathers to work and to be the breadwinners. Their comments about fathers being in the paid workforce included: "mandatory", "they have to", "they should", "it's only the lazy ones that stay home", a necessary source of "resources", and

> (a father) wasn't designed to look after kids, he was designed to go out to work.

Another 27 of the parents (13 fathers, 31%; 14 mothers, 24%) believed that fathers should work, but their statements about this were less adamant, and they sometimes voiced regrets: it's "the traditional way that's expected of them. I was brought up to think that men worked", "it's the done thing, you seem to have to do it (but) I'm all in favour of fathers staying home and rearing their children", "well often in the more traditional set-up fathers need to work", "it's a necessity for us - someone's got to bring in the bread."

Other parents recommended flexible arrangements. Of these, 18 (10 mothers, 17%; 8 fathers, 19%) commented that one or other parent should be at home: "okay if (his) partner is not working", "it makes no difference whether the mother or father is at home or working", "(it's) good if one parent can stay home, a partnership arrangement". Another 8 parents said that it was appropriate for fathers to bring up children. There were also 17 parents (10 mothers, 17%; 7 fathers, 17%) who said that one or other parent should be working:

> as long as there is a primary income, one employed if the other is unemployed or made redundant.

Concern about unemployment was evident. Four mothers talked about the stress they experienced because the father of the household was unemployed.

For 19 parents (11 mothers, 19%; 8 fathers, 19%), fathers' work kept them away from their children too often. They commented that young children would benefit from seeing more of their fathers. Furthermore, some parents (9 mothers, 16%; 4 fathers, 10%) identified limitations or inadequacies associated with the traditional role of fathers. An example of a father's comments in this category was:

> Fathers working? Fine - but there's a problem with the male ego (with) work being seen as the most important thing.

One mother stated: "there's less guilt and stress for working fathers than working mothers, they've just got one job"; and another commented:

> Ah yes, well. It would be nice to see the unpaid work shared equally, wouldn't it? I think it's outrageous that that's considered to be normal and ordinary that mothers do it, and it's considered to be unnatural, and uncaring and unmotherly (for mothers of young children to be in paid work). It's as normal for either sex to wish to do it. And that's society's expectations. The structure of work ought to allow either to do it with equal facility one way or the other.

Over all, the parents' views on fathers working showed that almost 20% were emphatic that fathers should be in paid work, 27% mentioned the obligation to work, 35% recommended more flexible arrangements, and 13% pointed out inadequacies in the traditional role of fathers.

Education Courses

The courses undertaken by the parents/guardians during their child's first 5 years of life are summarised in Table 5, which shows that 47 parents were studying at some stage during that period. In total, 16 (38%) of the fathers and 31 (52%) of the mothers had participated in study courses during the previous 5 years. University degree or diploma courses, and courses at polytechnics, were the types of courses most frequently mentioned.

Patterns of Study during the Child's First 5 Years

When the children were aged under 1 year, 6 (10%) of their mothers were studying. The types of courses they undertook were: playcentre courses (2 mothers), short courses at polytechnics (2 mothers), and university degree courses (2 mothers). During the children's first year of life, 7 (17%) of their fathers were studying. The courses they embarked on then included: workplace training (2 fathers), short courses at polytechnics (2 fathers), longer (2 to 4 years' full-time equivalent) courses at polytechnics (1 father), and university degree courses (2 fathers).

By the time the children were 1 to 2 years of age, 8 (14%) of their mothers were studying. The courses their mothers were involved in included: playcentre courses (2 mothers), short courses at polytechnics (1 mother), longer (2 to 4 years' full-time equivalent) courses at polytechnics (1 mother), university degree courses (2 mothers), and other courses (Cake Decorators' Guild, Department of Social Welfare fostering, or Wellington College of Homeopathy course) (2 mothers). There were 8 (19%) of the fathers studying during that year. Their courses included: workplace training (2 fathers), short courses at polytechnics (2 fathers), longer (2 to 4 years' full-time equivalent) courses at polytechnics (1 father), and university degree courses (3 fathers).

In the year when the children were aged 2 to 3 years, there was an increase in the number of mothers who were studying. By then, 14 (24%) of the mothers were enrolled in courses. These courses included: playcentre courses (4 mothers), short courses at polytechnics (4 mothers), longer (2 to 4 years' full-time equivalent) courses at polytechnics (1 mother), university degree courses (3 mothers), and other courses (Cake Decorators' Guild, Department of Social Welfare fostering, Wellington College of Homeopathy course) (2 mothers). There were still 8 (19%) of the fathers studying, undertaking fairly similar courses to the previous year, but 3 of the fathers were involved in other types of courses (including farm courses).

When the children were aged 3 to 4 years, 12 (20%) of the mothers were studying. Their courses still included: playcentre courses (3 mothers), short courses at polytechnics (3 mothers), longer (2 to 4 years' full-time equivalent) courses at polytechnics (1 mother), university degree courses (4 mothers), and other courses (1 mother). There were now 10 (24%) of the fathers studying, undertaking a similar range of types of courses to those taken the year before.

The year the children were aged 4 to 5 years, the number of mothers studying increased to 16 (27%). Their courses now covered a wide range: pre-employment (1 mother), school

certificate papers (1 mother), first aid course (1 mother), workplace training (1 mother), playcentre courses (3 mothers), short courses at polytechnics (3 mothers), longer (2 to 4 years' full-time equivalent) courses at polytechnics (1 mother), university degree courses (4 mothers), and other courses (1 mother). By that year, the number of fathers participating in courses had reached 11 (26%). Of these, 1 was involved in a pre-employment course, 3 were undertaking workplace training, 2 were at short courses at polytechnics, 2 were at longer (2 to 4 years' full-time equivalent) courses at polytechnics, 2 attended university degree courses, and the remaining 1 was doing a farming course.

During the first 5 years of the children's lives then, the number of mothers participating in study courses increased from 6 (10%) in the first year to 16 (27%) the year the children turned 5 years. The pattern of fathers' involvement in study remained relatively stable throughout that period, with a gradual increase from 7 (17%) fathers studying in the first year to 11 (26%) fathers studying the year the children were 5 years of age.

Benefits of Studying with a Young Child

When asked about the benefits of (good things about) studying when they had a young child, 13 parents (11 mothers and 2 fathers) mentioned stimulation, self-satisfaction, interest, and enjoyment: "doing something for myself", "an evening out", "something to keep my brain ticking over".

In addition, 12 parents (7 mothers and 5 fathers) described studying as useful for future job seeking. They hoped to gain "marketable skills", or evidence for future employers of "motivation to do things". One of the parents enrolled in a full-time comprehensive nursing course commented:

> Just - that I hope to come out at the end of the course and give my children a better future. That's the only, the real reason why I'm doing this - a better future for ourselves. I'll be in paid employment where I'm not laid off or made redundant. I think that's a benefit.

Another 6 parents (5 mothers and 1 father) who were involved in playcentre courses, or social science courses at university or polytechnics, described their courses as useful for childrearing, or parenting:

> It's making me understand a bit more about child development and things like that, and I'm finding insights into how to deal with (her child). So actually, it's improved my relationship with him since I started a course like that. You know, we did early childhood development so it's been quite good.

For 4 fathers (but no mothers) studying was useful for the job or for promotion within their current type of work.

Table 5

Types of Education Courses Undertaken by Mothers and Fathers with a Child Aged under 5 Years

Type of Course	Mothers	Fathers	Total
University degree/diploma papers	8	4	12
Polytechnic/night school: short computing course	7	2	9
Polytechnic: 2-4 years' full-time equivalent course*	3	3	6
Workplace in-house training, informal work-related	1	3	4
Playcentre courses	4	0	4
Pre-employment, TOPS, Access, Basic Adult Education	1	2	3
School Certificate/6th Form Certificate paper/s	2	1	3
St Johns, Red Cross, First Aid, Civil Defense	1	0	1
Other: Course run by other agencies**	4	1	5

Note:
N of parents = 101, of whom 47 (47%) were engaged in study during their child's first 5 years.
* e.g., NZCE, NZCD, Comprehensive Nursing Diploma course, accountancy course.
** e.g., Wellington College of Homeopathy, Cake Decorators' Guild, farm school, Department of Social Welfare fostering course.

Other good things mentioned were: the financial support was adequate (1 father, and 2 lone mothers who said that Social Welfare's help with the childcare costs helped); it was useful as a step towards higher education (1 mother); having childcare arrangements for students or having a creche at the school (2 mothers); and role modelling, it was "good for child to see (the parent) learning, doing homework" (1 mother, 1 father).

More fathers than mothers reported experiencing no benefits. There were 9 parents (6 fathers and 3 mothers) who said they had experienced few or no benefits. Their comments included: "none", "don't know if there were any", "none whatsoever".

Difficulties when Studying with a Young Child

Some of the main difficulties encountered by parents who were studying when they had one or more young children were tiredness or exhaustion, interruptions, time pressures, and financial needs.

Twelve parents (7 mothers, 5 fathers) said that they experienced tiredness, exhaustion, lack of sleep, or late nights studying after their children were asleep. Eleven parents (8 fathers and 3 mothers) found interruptions by their infants or young children, and "broken concentration", had been a problem. Nine parents (7 mothers and 2 fathers) mentioned time pressures, workload, stress, or time management difficulties.

Financial problems were discussed by 4 mothers and 1 father. The range of financial difficulties they had experienced included: difficulties paying the course fees, being unable to afford to continue the course when the university fees increased, loss of earnings, the high cost of books or course-related expenses, and the high cost of creche fees or childcare.

Other difficulties were: having insufficient time with the children or conflicts between time spent with children and time studying or attending evening lectures (5 fathers, 3 mothers); travel to the course, transport difficulties, or the time spent travelling (2 mothers, 1 father); and having insufficient time supporting one's partner and marital pressures (2 fathers).

For 3 mothers, care of sick children and related worry about being absent from the course was a problem. For another 3 mothers, co-ordinating and planning care of the children with their partners had been difficult:

> I couldn't go and sit down and study. I had to arrange with (partner) to take leave.

Voluntary Work

Various types of voluntary work were undertaken by parents during the first 5 years of their child's life. These included: work with early childhood organisations and centres (playcentres, nga kohanga reo, kindergartens, childcare centres), or schools (parent helping, fund raising, or board of trustees); helping neighbours and friends or caring for other children; church work (including taking Sunday school, mowing the lawns, cleaning the

church, church-based community work, counselling, church administration); sports coaching or work for a sports club; and involvement in local support groups (parent support groups, Plunket, victims' support, or women's refuge) and community work (civil defence). In addition, a few parents were involved in local performing arts groups, or with international support and development agencies.

We were also told by 3 of the parents that they did "community service". As that service was legally required of them by the courts, we have not classified it as voluntary work.

Over all, relatively large percentages of women and men were involved in voluntary work during the child's first 5 years. In total, 44 (76%) of the mothers and 26 (62%) of the fathers did some regular voluntary work during this period.

Patterns of Voluntary Work during the Child's First 5 Years

The types and patterns of voluntary work undertaken by the parents showed some changes during the child's first 5 years. Among some of the parents, the hours spent on voluntary work remained relatively high throughout these years.

When the children were aged under 1 year, parent support groups and Plunket featured most prominently in the mothers' voluntary work. Among the mothers, 13 worked voluntarily for parent support groups or Plunket. This was 22% of the total number of mothers, and almost half of those who were involved in some type of voluntary work during the child's first year. In addition 1 father contributed to a parent support group. Other types of voluntary work mentioned for this period included: church work (4 mothers and 4 fathers); playcentre (3 mothers and 2 fathers); helping a neighbour (3 mothers and 2 fathers); sports coaching and sports groups (4 fathers); te kohanga reo (2 mothers); childcare centre (1 father); kindergarten (1 mother), and school/board of trustees (1 mother). When their children were aged from birth to 1 year, the women worked voluntarily from 0 to 15 hours per week, the men from 0 to 12 hours a week. In total, at least 33% of the mothers and 20% of the fathers did an hour or more of voluntary work weekly during that first year.

By the time the children were aged 1 to 2 years, the mothers were most often involved in parent support and Plunket work (7 mothers, 2 fathers); playcentre (6 mothers); and church work (5 mothers and 2 fathers). Fathers were more often contributing to sports clubs or sports coaching (4 fathers and 1 mother). Other voluntary activities were: helping a neighbour (3 mothers, 1 father); helping at a childcare centre (2 mothers, 1 father); helping at a kindergarten (3 mothers); working voluntarily at te kohanga reo (2 mothers); and helping at the school/on the board of trustees (1 father). When their children were aged 1 to 2 years, the women worked voluntarily from 0 to 18 hours per week, the men from 0 to 12 hours a week. In total, at least 35% of the mothers and 20% of the fathers undertook an hour or more of voluntary work in the community each week.

When the children were aged 2 to 3 years, playcentre was mentioned predominantly by women (8 mothers, no fathers) and sports clubs or coaching by the men (5 fathers, 1 mother). Also prominent were: parent support groups, Plunket, victims' support (6 mothers

and 2 fathers); kindergarten (6 mothers, 1 father); and the school or school board of trustees (4 mothers). By this stage, the women worked voluntarily from 0 to 53 hours per week, and the men's hours remained stable at 0 to 12 hours a week. The percentages of women and men in regular voluntary work had increased slightly. In total, at least 39% of the mothers and 24% of the fathers carried out an hour or more of voluntary work in the community weekly.

During the time the children were aged 3 to 4 years, voluntary work in kindergartens became more prevalent, notably among the women (mentioned by 17 mothers and 3 fathers). Other types of voluntary work included: involvement at playcentre (7 mothers, 1 father); helping with sports clubs or coaching (6 fathers, 2 mothers); work for the school or on the school board of trustees (5 mothers); parent support groups, Plunket, victims' support (3 mothers and 2 fathers); and helping a childcare centre (1 father). The women worked voluntarily from 0 to 21 hours per week, and the range of the men's hours increased slightly to 0 to 16 hours a week. At least 58% of the mothers and 34% of the fathers completed 1 hour or more of voluntary work in the community each week.

When the children reached the age of 4 to 5 years, voluntary work remained widespread. For the women voluntary work tended to focus on early childhood centres and schools, whereas among the men sports-related volunteering was most common. The most frequently mentioned venues in which voluntary work took place were: kindergartens (19 mothers and 2 fathers); schools (13 women and 3 men); sports clubs (or coaching) (8 fathers and 2 mothers); community support groups (6 mothers and 2 fathers); and playcentres (3 mothers, 1 father). At this stage, the women still worked voluntarily from 0 to 21 hours per week, and the men from 0 to 16 hours a week. At least 60% of the mothers and 41% of the fathers worked voluntarily in the community for a minimum of 1 hour per week.

The parents of 5-year-old children were currently working voluntarily at schools, churches, sports clubs, community groups, and in the neighbourhood. Types of voluntary work included: helping at school (or serving on the board of trustees) (20 mothers and 6 fathers); church work (8 mothers and 2 fathers); helping with sports coaching or at a sports club (8 fathers and 2 mothers); community support groups or civil defense (7 mothers and 2 fathers); helping a neighbour (3 mothers and 3 fathers); and helping at a playcentre or a kindergarten (3 mothers at each). The women's hours of voluntary work dropped to 0 to 12 hours per week, and the men's hours were 0 to 14 hours a week. The percentages of women in regular voluntary work also declined, probably reflecting both a decline in helping at early childhood centres after their 5-year-olds started school, and an increase in the mothers' participation in the paid workforce at this point. In total, 44% of the mothers and 43% of the fathers of the 5-year-old children worked voluntarily for an hour or more per week. Another 16% of the mothers and 14% of the fathers said that they did occasional voluntary work but it averaged less than an hour a week.

Perspectives on Voluntary Work

The participants tended to make favourable comments about voluntary work. Time was a problem, and consequently 3 fathers and 3 mothers who were in full-time paid employment

said that they had "no time" to do voluntary work. Another 3 fathers commented that they needed to spend more time with their own children, rather than taking on voluntary work.

It was more complex for some informants to quantify their voluntary work than their paid work. Often the parents were involved in a range of different types of voluntary work during the course of a year.

For some informants, quantifying voluntary work was not consistent with their values and the meanings that voluntary work had for them. Consistent with Theresa Hagan's application of Giorgi's (1986) phenomenological approach when analysing interview transcripts, these meanings were acknowledged, transcribed, and reported. One parent, when asked about types of voluntary work undertaken, replied:

> Yea, I did a lot of those things. I used to go to the kohanga and the kindy. I used to take him with me to the kohanga.

Here, it was not appropriate to record the number of hours of voluntary work done each week:

> I don't know. I mean, we're sort of into helping people too, so we don't really clock it up.
> Interviewer: ... so there'd be neighbours and friends you'd be helping too?
> Informant: Yea. We do a lot of that! And if you're not working they just put you on everything. I still do a lot with the school ... but it's just natural for Maori people to help one another.

Connections among Work, Education, and Childcare Arrangements

Throughout the first 5 years of the children's lives, there were no set patterns of work and use of the early childhood services which differentiated mothers who were and were not in paid employment. For example, the 5 mothers who were in full-time paid employment when the child was aged from 1 to 5 years all used different types or combinations of services. One of these mothers worked in the family business, enrolled her child at kindergarten from the age of 3 years, and had some extended family support with caring for the children. Another family used a combination of a nanny, a playgroup, and a kindergarten. A third used kindergarten from ages 3 to 5 years, and the father was the primary caregiver. The fourth family used playcentre and a nanny. The fifth and final family where the mother worked full-time hours during this period used changing combinations which included a kohanga reo, a childcare, a kindergarten, and a grandparent's care. These diverse and changing trends will be illustrated further at the case study level.

Six of the 11 mothers who had not participated in either paid work or study from the 5-year-old child's birth up until the time of the interview similarly used a range of combinations of early childhood care and education. One used a childcare centre and a kohanga reo sequentially; 1 used a playcentre when the child was aged 1 to 3 years, a childcare centre from age 3 to 4 years, and a kindergarten from 4 to 5 years; 1 used a playgroup until 3 years and then a kindergarten; 1 used a kindergarten and then a kohanga reo between 3 and 5

years; and 2 used a playgroup and then a private preschool. The other 5 mothers used kindergarten only. No nannies or family daycare arrangements were mentioned, and there were few combined concurrent arrangements, but otherwise these patterns are relatively comparable to those among families where the mothers were in full-time paid work.

Over all there were no clear, consistent patterns of childcare use among parents who were studying. However, when types of courses were separated out, there was an obvious link between mothers' use of playcentres for their children while they were doing playcentre courses. The mothers studying at other institutions tended to use complex and changing arrangements, but some of the mothers at university or school used that educational institution's childcare centre/creche, sometimes in combination with a kindergarten. For example, of the mothers studying at schools, universities, and polytechnics when their children were aged 4 to 5 years, 3 used a childcare centre and a kindergarten (1 sequentially, 2 concurrently), and 2 of these childcare centres were based at the educational institution. The remaining 5 mothers who studied at universities, schools, or polytechnics when their children were aged 4 to 5 years used these services: kindergarten only (3 families), family daycare and kindergarten (1 family), and a private preschool (1 family).

There was a link between voluntary work and use of the early childhood education and care services, with many mothers and a few fathers making regular voluntary contributions to these services. For just a few women, this in turn led directly into paid employment. For example, 1 mother who contributed to playcentre moved into part-time paid playcentre work, 1 mother who did some voluntary work for a school later joined the school staff, and 1 who completed early childhood qualifications and voluntary work for playcentre moved into paid work in the education sector. Two children attended a childcare centre or a kohanga reo while their mothers worked voluntarily with women's/victims' refuges in the community.

Summary

Altogether, 67% of the women and 98% of the men we interviewed had participated in paid work at some stage during the child's first 5 years of life. The percentage of mothers working full time rose from 10% when the children were aged under 1 year to 19% by the year the children were 4 to 5 years. Each year from the child's birth up until school entry, at least a third of the fathers were working over 50 hours per week. There was some dissatisfaction, especially among some of the fathers, about the hours spent in paid work.

The main benefit of paid work was seen as having an income. More mothers than fathers mentioned interest in the work itself, or having contact with adults, as benefits. Difficulties for parents who had worked during the child's first 5 years included missing out on having time with their children, which was more often mentioned by fathers. Mothers more often mentioned these difficulties: time pressures, fitting in household tasks, guilt, and finding appropriate childcare.

Financial difficulties and the economic context influenced many parents' views and experiences of mothers of young children working. Many participants thought fathers were obliged to be in paid work, but more than a third recommended more flexible roles within

families.

In total, 47 parents had been studying during their child's first 5 years. University degree or diploma courses and courses at polytechnics were the types of courses most frequently undertaken. Parents' participation in study courses increased between the year the children were born and the year the children turned 5 years of age. This trend was more evident among mothers. Benefits experienced by parents who were studying included stimulation, interest, and satisfaction; developing marketable skills; and gaining more knowledge about childrearing. The main difficulties encountered by parents who were studying when they had young children were tiredness or exhaustion, interruptions, time pressures, and financial needs.

The parents were involved in various types of voluntary work, including: work with early childhood organisations and centres (playcentres, kohanga reo, kindergartens, childcare centres), or schools (parent helping, fund raising, or board of trustees); helping neighbours and friends or caring for other children; church work; sports coaching or work for a sports club; and involvement in local support groups. Relatively large percentages of women and men participated regularly in voluntary work during the child's first 5 years, and although they did not always want to calculate the hours involved, women often contributed substantial amounts of voluntary work.

Over all, the connections between work, education and childcare arrangements, and between paid work and use of the early childhood care and education services, were diverse and complex.

Chapter 5

PARENTAL LEAVE

This chapter outlines the participants' experiences of parental leave the year that their child was born. Each child was aged 5 years at the time of the interviews. The children were born in 1988, close to the passing of the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 (New Zealand Government, 1988). Drawing on their own experiences, the parents made recommendations about parental leave polices and related workplace practices.

Several items of legislation are relevant when reading about these experiences and recommendations, and place them in their political and social context. Some Acts of Parliament of central importance here are: the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987, and the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Amendment Act 1991 (New Zealand Government, 1988, 1993) allowing for up to 1 year of unpaid parental leave for either parent; the Employment Contracts Act 1991 specifying procedures for workplace disputes and other employer-employee contractual matters; and the Human Rights Act of 1993 (New Zealand Government, 1993) which prohibits direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, religious belief, ethical belief, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, disability, age, political opinion, employment status, family status, or sexual orientation.

Experiences of Parental Leave

During the year before their child was born, 34 (59%) of the women and 39 (93%) of the men were in the paid workforce. Among those who were in the paid workforce, 11 men and 11 women said that they had taken parental leave.

We asked the parents who had not taken any leave whether this was their own choice. Some of the women said they chose to resign when pregnant or before the birth. However, 6 of the mothers said that their work was casual or temporary and they had no choice or access to parental leave, 4 were self-employed with no paid leave available, 2 applied for parental leave but were not granted it, 2 were made redundant, another 1 took unpaid leave as the only option that she was aware of, and 2 said that their employers actively discouraged taking parental leave. One of the 2 women who applied for parental leave but was not granted any leave made these comments:

> I did apply for it but I wasn't granted it. I was working at ... in Christchurch for a year and they basically told me that they were cutting staff, and that when I came back there wasn't going to be a job for me. So basically they told me to resign.

Among the men, 7 said they chose not to take parental leave, which was available, because of their workloads or commitment to the job. Another 6 men said that annual leave was the

only option that they were aware of or they needed to use up accumulated annual leave, and another 1 said unpaid leave was the only option, 7 commented that they were self-employed at the time, 3 said it was not financially feasible for them to take unpaid leave, 2 said that leave policies were in place but employees were not encouraged to know about parental leave, and 1 said that his employer actively discouraged people from taking parental leave. Parental leave had not been relevant for 3 men from reconstituted families.

There was considerable variation in the duration of the mothers' and fathers' leave. Among the women, 8 took more than 1 month of leave, and 1 mother took less than 2 weeks. Only 3 mothers remembered having any paid leave. There was dissatisfaction among the women about the amount of parental leave they had experienced around the time of the birth, but some women were satisfied. In total, 35% of the women were satisfied, 18% made neutral comments, 47% were not satisfied.

The mothers who took more than 1 month of parental leave tended to be well qualified and working in the public service or in professional or clerical positions. One couple shared their parental leave and took 6 months each. Two mothers were granted parental leave for 1 year but did not return to work because they both gave birth to 2 more children during the next few years. Resuming work at the conclusion of the parental leave period appeared difficult if the child was firstborn and subsequently siblings were born. On the other hand, it was difficult for mothers to stay away on parental leave if their families were in financial difficulties. One mother was granted 1 year but went back to work after 1 month to pay the bills.

The men tended to take from 2 days' up to 2 weeks' leave. Only 1 father took more than 2 weeks, and 2 fathers had just 1 day off work to be present at the birth. Only a few fathers remembered having paid parental leave, and 9 said they used their annual leave. More men expressed neutral views on their experiences of parental leave. Among the men, 37% were satisfied, 38% made neutral comments, and 25% were dissatisfied.

We also sought information about who helped in the first weeks at home after the birth. Among the mothers, 26 (44%) mentioned receiving help from the child's father, and 28 (47%) said the infant's grandparent/s helped. Also mentioned were: health or community agencies (midwives, Plunket nurses) (8 mothers); aunts/uncles of the infant (7 mothers); friends (4 mothers); cousins or other relatives (2 mothers); and a neighbour (1 mother). However, 5 (8%) of the mothers said that no one helped them. For many of the mothers, these arrangements had worked out well, but for others, there was either insufficient support or disagreements with the relatives who were helping. In total, 48% of the mothers thought these arrangements had worked out well, 14% made neutral comments, and 16% said things had not worked out well, and the remaining 22% were not sure or could not remember.

Among the men, 26 (62%) said that they (the father of the infant) had helped in the first weeks at home after the birth, and 17 (40%) also talked about receiving assistance from the infant's grandparents. In addition the fathers mentioned: health or community agencies (midwives, Plunket nurses) (3 fathers); aunts of the infant (1 father); friends (1 father); and cousins or other relatives (1 father). Only 1 father said that no one was available to help.

Among the fathers, 40% thought these arrangements had worked out well, 29% made neutral comments, 14% said things had not worked out well, and the remaining 17% were not sure.

Recommendations about Parental Leave

Parents were asked what leave provisions they wanted to be available both for mothers when they have a baby, and for fathers when their baby is born.

Parental Leave for Women

Firstly, recommendations were sought on leave provisions for mothers. The most frequent reply, made by 40 (40%) of the parents, was that there should be 1 year of leave. In total 26 (45%) of the mothers, and 14 (33%), of the fathers suggested that 1 year was appropriate: "1 year, the law as it is, as covered by the Act". There were also comments from 4 fathers and 2 mothers that the law was adequate but it should be supported and enforced. Their comments included: "employees need more protection (from job termination by their employers), and "small businesses need support to ensure the provisions of the Act become a reality".

In addition, 7 mothers and 4 fathers, who said that a year was probably insufficient, recommended that leave of longer than a year should be available. They said some paid leave was necessary during pregnancy, before going into labour. Another 6 mothers and 5 fathers recommended that mothers should be permitted to take as long as they needed.

Some parents commented regretfully that they had missed out, and 7 mothers and 3 fathers stressed that parental leave should be available: "maternity leave should be granted when requested". Financial concerns were expressed: 6 mothers and 1 father said that paid parental leave was necessary. Another 4 mothers and 1 father said that payment of a lump sum on return to work is impractical, and families struggling to pay the bills needed a more regular payment procedure:

> Mothers cannot afford to stay home with their babies unless they are being paid, a weekly income is needed.

Periods of less than a year's parental leave were suggested by some participants, most of whom appeared not to know about the provisions of the Act. Of these, 11 mothers and 4 fathers recommended between 4 and 11 months, and 8 fathers and 5 mothers suggested between 1 month and 3 months. One father (but no mothers) thought that 8 days to 3 weeks was sufficient leave for a mother when she has a baby.

Another 4 mothers and 4 fathers talked about employer-employee communication. They pointed out that planning and balancing the employer's and the employee's needs was important.

However, a few parents (2 mothers and 3 fathers) said that no leave was needed, mothers should be at home, and they did not agree with mothers going back to work. One father replied:

> (Leave) from the working force? If someone was working for me and going to have a baby? Well I don't think they should return to the workforce until they (the children) are old enough. Because as an employer I wouldn't like - I'd find it difficult - to have a full-time staff member who is sometimes called away from their job because their kids were sick. Therefore I would have to make provisions for someone to be on call to replace them. So we at this stage have never employed married women. If we have, their children have been 10 or 12 (years).

Parental Leave for Men

When we asked for recommendations on leave provisions for fathers, parents again showed wide variations in their views. The most prevalent request was to have a few weeks of paid leave readily available to support the mother around the time of the birth.

Suggestions about the duration of leave for fathers included: 17 (29%) of the mothers and 13 (31%) of the fathers said 8 days to 3 weeks was appropriate (for example, "1 week either side of the birth"); 12 (21%) of the mothers and 2 (5%) of the fathers specified between 1 month and 3 months; 2 mothers and 2 fathers specified between 4 and 11 months; 6 (10%) of the mothers and 4 (10%) of the fathers said that 1 year was appropriate; 4 mothers (but no fathers) thought that longer than 1 year was needed; and 7 mothers and 4 fathers said that up to 1 week immediately around the birth was sufficient. Another 3 mothers and 4 fathers did not want any time specified, and their comments included: "as long as needed", "it depends on the difficulty of the birth", "it should be left open". A few parents (1 mother and 4 fathers) thought that no leave was needed, that fathers should use their annual leave, or that only 1 parent should have any leave.

The situation of fathers in the workplace taking parental leave had diverse implications and meanings for the participants. There were 20 mothers (34%) and 4 fathers (10%) who said that leave was needed to support mothers. One of the 20 mothers who raised this issue said:

> Mothers are vulnerable. They may feel powerless to ask for help ... Leave should be granted to fathers as of right.

One father, who said that up to a year was about right, added "but breast feeding should still be encouraged in the first 6 months". Bonding of infants with their fathers was mentioned by 4 mothers and 3 fathers who said that, from their experience, fathers and babies needed time to adjust to one another.

The importance of protecting employees was emphasised by 5 mothers and 4 fathers (10%), one of whom made these comments:

> Employees need more protection: the law (Parental Leave) needs to be tightened and enforced, both parents need paid leave around the birth, not one or other parent.

Another 4 mothers and 4 fathers wanted more flexible workplaces. Financial considerations

were again a problem for some families. The need for paid leave was specified by 8 mothers and 7 fathers.

In contrast, 2 fathers who were administrators/managers (but no mothers) specified in detail the needs of employers. They thought parental leave should depend on the employer's or the company's needs, and made these comments: "business is disrupted if policies are too lenient", "the employer wants value for money".

Sick Children and Parents' Leave

Parents tended to be concerned about flexibility and about having domestic leave available. When asked what leave should be available for parents in the workforce when their young children are ill, 45 (76%) of the women and 28 (67%) of the men suggested some form of domestic leave provision. Among those who specified the number of days needed per year, most wanted more than 5 days, separate from the parent's own sick leave provision. Others said that policies and practices concerned with parental leave for parents caring for sick children should take into account the severity of the illness and/or the number of children in the family. One of the fathers with more than 3 children made these calculations:

> It depends on how many children you've got because they can get sick at different times. Children probably get sick say 3 or 4 times a year, so if you had one child you'd need at least 4 or 5 days, say 5 days for one child. I think that's what it should be, 5 days for each child you've got. That would work very well. I think the government takes the average family of 2 point something or other, and in a lot of cases it is, but in a lot more cases they've got 3 or 4 or 1 child.

In addition, 20 (34%) of the mothers and 16 (38%) of the fathers said they wanted flexible, reasonable, or accommodating employers. Although 11 parents recommended that paid domestic leave was essential, 1 father thought that such leave should be unpaid.

Things that the participants suggested would make it easier for parents when they have sick children were: flexible employers (mentioned again by 45% of the mothers and 40% of the fathers); greater emphasis among employers and in society on children's needs and valuing children (34% of the mothers, 7% of the fathers); support for parents and children from community agencies (9% of the mothers and 19% of the fathers) or from the extended family (24% of the mothers, 40% of the fathers); reasonable and honest employees (10% of the mothers and 14% of the fathers); and improved financial support with free health care for children or paid parental leave (7% of the mothers, 12% of the fathers). Other recommendations made by smaller numbers of parents included: helping parents to have less stress in their lives, developing more workplace trusts as a way of organising financial support for families with sick children, having more understanding and helpful health professionals/doctors' receptionists, and establishing paid parental leave provisions for casual and temporary workers.

Other Recommendations on Parental Leave

When we asked for further comments on parental leave, the need for more flexible employers was a continuing theme, mentioned by 21 mothers (36%) and 13 fathers (31%). These parents wanted more "benevolent" employers: "family oriented workplaces", employers who "make sure their staff are aware of what they are entitled to", "employers have to do something so employees with families don't feel so guilty", "employers who take staff back on the same grade (or at the same level) after parental leave". One of these parents commented:

> I think employers should make sure that their staff are aware of what they are entitled to - men and women, in this situation. I mean I dipped out (by reading in his employment contract, at the top of the section on parental leave, that "parental leave is unpaid leave" and reading no further, thereby missing out on leave). I should have known better actually, but that's beside the point. A lot of employers don't advertise the fact that provisions are there, because it costs them. They don't go out of their way to help, and that's not just parental leave, it's just about any kind of provision. If you don't ask you don't get. So I think that should be pushed along. I mean it depends on who your employer is and who's in the human resources area.

In addition, 11 parents (4 mothers and 7 fathers) recommended that double standards for employers and employees should be eliminated, pointed out "dangers of the Employment Contracts Act", or commented that "employers must accommodate employees who are parents". Several said they expected that people should be able "to ask for parental leave and get it".

Another 8 parents (3 mothers and 5 fathers) expressed concerns about their past or present employers' views and actions regarding gender roles, their difficulties with "conservative employers and managers", and the need to "action EEO principles". Both women and men spoke from their own experiences. In the words of one father:

> I did work at ... Very conservative. The management's attitude is of strict division of labour and women still being at home to look after children and not being able to be given the opportunities to participate in paid work, and I think that's so archaic ... I had a few battles with management in ... There were times when I decided family had priority ... It's hard. There seems to be a typical management structure where women are not appreciated.

Parents saw having the job left open for the person to return to it as a major benefit that is "very important for people taking parental leave". Some informants emphasised the importance of maintaining contact with the workplace while on parental leave. They recommended that provision should be made to keep up with workplace technology, changes in the work environment, and strategic decision making. For example, one parent made these comments about the provision in the Parental Leave Act that the position of a parent on leave should be left open:

> The formal provisions are only a very small part of it. The important part is about still feeling connected or otherwise to the workplace and therefore feeling confident or otherwise about going back.

Further, 5 parents commented on society's views on gender roles with regard to parental leave. Issues addressed included the prejudice against men who take parental leave, and the need for more input by men in household tasks.

Six parents spoke from their own experience about the flexibility of self-employment:

> I haven't worked for anyone for about 10 years. It's hard to know what (non-self-employed) people are up against.

In contrast, 4 parents (1 mother and 3 fathers) made comments, based on their own experiences as employers, about employers' needs. They believed that parental leave policies "should reflect the employer's ability to deliver", and they pointed out that it is difficult for employers in small businesses to implement parental leave policies. One father said:

> It's pretty hard for me because I'm an employer and a parent. You've got to have 2 views. In my case if (5-year-old child's name)'s headmaster rang up (wife's name) and said to her while she was working that (the child) was sick, I know that a phone call would come to me and I'd have to pick him up. She would feel that her responsibility was at the job and she can't get out of work, whereas I can take a day off work to look after my child. So that view is different from my view as an employer. I'd be annoyed - less co-operative - about that. I don't get myself in that position because I wouldn't hire someone with a child under 10 years unless the person was exceptional. Or anyone with children. If I did offer them work I would ask them to make arrangements for someone to pick them up if they are sick. It's something to be worked out between the employer and the staff member.

On a different matter pertaining to leave, 3 mothers and 2 fathers commented that parents of young children tend to have insufficient breaks alone: "more help (is needed) for mothers, working and non working, to have breaks". There was also concern about parents needing to have breaks together:

> My husband and I ... have not been away together ... I would say it would be money, but we haven't had a holiday together. It would be nice to have support people around to look after the children for a week or whatever, or for his work to be able to give him time off for our relationship.

Finally, financial difficulties and recommendations were a recurring theme. When asked if there was anything else they would like to say about parental leave, some mothers described the necessity to work as a problem for themselves and their families. For example, one mother commented:

> I would have loved to have stayed home longer with my babies, for my own health as well, but because of the bills ... mothers need to be able to stay home with their babies.

For many fathers, unpaid leave was not seen as a viable option: "Leave should be available on full pay, and the time made up later if necessary".

Summary

In total, 34 (59%) of the mothers and 39 (93%) of the fathers in this study were in the paid workforce during the year before their child was born, and 11 (26%) of the fathers and 11 (19%) of the mothers said that they had taken parental leave. Only 8 of the mothers took more than 1 month of leave, and only 3 mothers remembered having any paid leave. The fathers tended to take from 2 days' up to 2 weeks' leave around the time of the birth. Only 1 father took more than 2 weeks of parental leave, only a few fathers remembered having paid parental leave, and 9 said they used their annual leave. Although some women were satisfied, there was an over all trend towards dissatisfaction among the women about the amount of parental leave they had experienced around the time of the birth. For some parents in the workforce parental leave was not offered, and the parental leave legislation was sometimes not enforced.

Parents varied in their views and recommendations on leave provisions both for mothers and for fathers. It was frequently expected that mothers should be entitled to 1 year of leave, or "the law as it is". The most prevalent request for fathers was to have a few weeks of paid leave readily available to support the mother around the time of the birth. Some informants emphasised the importance of maintaining contact with the workplace while on parental leave.

Parents were concerned about the need for flexibility among employers and in the workplace, and about having domestic leave available for parents when their children are ill. Some parents recommended that double standards for employers and employees should be eliminated. However, a few parents were concerned about employers' needs, and several pointed out that it is difficult for employers in small businesses to implement parental leave policies.

Chapter 6

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter synthesises the information reported in the preceding chapters, drawing conclusions from the main themes reported. Future research directions are also outlined.

Diversity and Change

The research design, and more specifically the random sampling procedure, led to the participation of a wide range of families in this study. Diversity of experience, and changing experiences, were themes across these interviews. For example, types of employment patterns within the 2-parent domestic groups included: father working full time, mother part time; mother working full time, father part time; father working full time, mother not working; father and/or mother seeking employment. Patterns of mothers' and fathers' participation in paid work were not fixed; within families they changed over time during the first 5 years of the child's life. Similarly, the patterns of use of the early childhood education and care services were complex, and sometimes involved multiple arrangements which changed during the course of the child's first 5 years.

There were few typical, consistent patterns which differentiated groups of mothers working full time from those who were not in paid work or study, showing the nexus of their use of early childhood care and education and participation in paid work during the 5-year period. Conversely, the most "typical" pattern during the 5 years was one of mothers moving out of and into the paid workforce sometimes several times, influenced by factors such as: the birth of a subsequent child or children; the casual, temporary, or part-time nature of their employment; redundancies or changing hours and pressures in the workplace for themselves or their partners; changes of residence, usually within New Zealand; fluctuations in financial circumstances; the completion of educational courses; and changes in marital status/partnership circumstances.

Similarly, many families reported changes in the early childhood services they used from one year to the next, and a few reported several changes within a single year. The complex and multiple use of the early childhood services reported by increasing numbers of parents each year of the children's first 5 years support the conclusion from the NZCER seminar on "multi child care use" that families' demands for early childhood education services are becoming diverse and complex (New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1987). These results are also consistent with the finding from the pilot study of the Competent Children project that parents use more than one early childhood service to expose their children to more people and activities, to fit in with their work and study schedules and other family commitments, and to meet cultural and language needs (Meade, 1994). It appears likely that no single early childhood service can at present meet all of the needs within families over time, and that more than one early childhood service may be needed when one

or both parents are moving in and out of the paid workforce.

During the process of the research, the changing and diverse experiences of the participants became clearly evident. The proposed case studies of families/domestic groups are an appropriate research strategy to provide further information about the informants' experiences. It was concluded, from inspecting the raw data and analysing the frequency data, that diversity and change were evident and that in-depth descriptions of 10 to 12 families' experiences would be useful to describe further the range of possible patterns. These conclusions about changing and diverse experiences of workforce participation and childcare arrangements were subsequently reconfirmed by reanalysing all of the interview data to check for contrastive patterns differentiating working and non-working mothers.

Access to Early Childhood Education and Care

The experiences and comments of many of the families participating in this study suggested that early childhood care and education is of benefit to children's socialisation, it provides learning and creative activities, assists with transition to school, and it is also important for the wellbeing of other family members. Over all, there were high rates of participation in early childhood care and education. In this study, 38% of the children had participated in organised early childhood education and care arrangements when aged under 1 year, and by 4 to 5 years 98% of the children experienced one or more of the early childhood education and care services. In comparison, the National Research Bureau (1993) survey showed that 21% of infants aged under 12 months, and 93% of children aged 4 years, were using some form of early childhood education and care service.

However, even in the present study with these high rates of participation, families' access to early childhood care and education services was sometimes impeded by difficulties with travel and a lack of transport, and by financial constraints. The experiences of many of these New Zealand families support the importance of having high quality early childhood education and care services which are both affordable and geographically accessible to all families.

Flexibility in Workplaces

The experiences and views of the participating parents who were employers and employees demonstrate a wide range of positions on gender equity in the labour market. For example, some of the experiences and views shared by the parents would now, if practised, be contrary to the Human Rights Act (1993) and were contrary to the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 (1988, 1993). In contrast, there were other participants who wanted all parents, including casual workers, to have the right to parental leave, to receive regular payments during parental leave, and to have equal employment opportunities.

On the whole, flexibility was a consistent theme. The emphasis of the majority of parents on the need for flexible employers and workplaces supports the findings of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (1993) phone-in survey where flexibility and mutual trust were the 2 major themes reported.

The difficulties of combining work and childrearing that were most often mentioned by mothers have implications for workplaces. These difficulties included time pressures, guilt, and finding appropriate childcare. These concerns are important in view of the findings from the U.S. that children, parents, workplaces, and society all benefit from high quality childcare (Galinsky & Friedman, 1993) and from workplace flexibility (Rapoport & Moss, 1990).

Impact of Long Hours of Paid Work

There are further implications regarding the appropriateness of workplace practices for families. Family-oriented workplace practices seem relevant given that 67% of the women and 98% of the men we interviewed participated in paid work during the child's first 5 years of life. Clearly, there were difficulties with the long hours of work expected in some workplaces, and performed by many fathers and a few mothers. It is perhaps not surprising that, with at least a third of the fathers working 50 hours or more per week right through from the year the children were born until they were at school, some fathers were dissatisfied about the hours spent they spent in paid work. Fathers also said that one of their main difficulties with being in paid work was missing out on having time with their children. This raises questions about the extent to which families' needs are catered for in workplaces, and about society's valuing of children.

Financial Constraints and Parental Leave

For some families, financial concerns and constraints were a recurring theme throughout the interviews. These findings are consistent with the concern about child poverty in the New Zealand research literature (Robertson, 1992; St John, 1991; Waldegrave, 1991). In the present study, more than half of the participants saw financial and economic need as a major influence on their experiences of mothers of young children working.

The relatively low uptake of parental leave among the families in this study, and the experiences of parents who found that parental leave was relatively inaccessible to them, suggest some further implications. Clearly, financial issues were a problem for some families, suggesting that unpaid leave, or payment of a lump sum on return to the workplace, is impractical for some families. The inequitable position of casual or temporary workers was a problem for parents and families. These findings suggest a need for policy makers to develop parental leave provisions that take into account women's life circumstances, and child and family poverty.

Gender Roles

The data presented in this study on responsibility within families for the care of young children show that women were primarily responsible for most aspects of the day-to-day care. However, there were exceptions and just a few fathers and grandfathers assumed these responsibilities.

Diverse opinions and experiences related to gender roles were evident throughout the report. For example, many participants believed fathers of young children were obliged to be in full-time paid work, in the responsible "breadwinner" role within families, but over a third of the

parents wanted more flexible roles.

Clearly, Wood's (1991) critique of the "current economic orthodoxy" in New Zealand, which does not recognise unpaid work, is relevant to the results reported in this study. In addition to their responsibility for childcare, many women and men participated regularly in voluntary work during their children's first 5 years, and although they did not always want to calculate the hours involved, women often contributed considerable amounts of voluntary work to the community. A substantial component of these voluntary contributions was to the early childhood services.

Education and Childrearing

There are also some findings of relevance to adult or tertiary education. In total, 47% of the parents had been studying during their child's first 5 years. University degree or diploma courses and courses at polytechnics were the types of courses most frequently undertaken. Parents' participation in study courses increased between the year the children were born and the year the children turned 5 years of age. Benefits experienced by parents who were studying included stimulation, interest, and satisfaction; developing marketable skills; and gaining more knowledge about childrearing. The main difficulties and barriers encountered by parents who were studying when they had young children were tiredness or exhaustion, interruptions, time pressures, and financial needs.

Future Research Directions

Clearly, there is scope for further qualitative analyses of the interview material, in order to address these issues in greater depth and to provide more information about the context and meanings of the participants' experiences. The random sample and the variations found in this study effectively provide the context for the proposed case studies. It is anticipated that the case studies will be valuable in illustrating the complexities of families' employment patterns and their use of the early childhood education and care services. They will also provide useful in-depth information about the participants' views and experiences of parental leave around the birth of a child and when children are ill. Where appropriate, a phenomenological perspective will be applied to describe what the experiences during the first 5 years of a child's life meant to the case study families (Giorgi, 1986; Svensson, 1986). The case studies of families will investigate further the experiences within different families, and the related implications.

There is also scope for a more comprehensive review of the New Zealand and international research and policy literature on: emerging issues of employee-driven labour market flexibility, related early childhood care and education provisions, the philosophies behind the statutory provision of parental leave, and how these issues link to families bringing up young children. These 2 areas of research, the case studies and the literature review, are continuing during 1994 and 1995.

Note

We are grateful to the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology whose support will enable us to carry out this ongoing research in 1994 to 1995, and also to investigate further aspects of the interface between workplaces,

families, and early childhood care and education services in 1995 to 1996. Members of the team involved in the ongoing research programme are Valerie Podmore and Paul Callister (joint co-ordinators), Theresa Sawicka, and Judith Galtry. The continuing research programme is entitled *Families, Work, and Education*.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Labour Force Participation, Childcare Arrangements,
and Parental Leave: A Study Of New Zealand Families

Short Title: Families' Employment and Childcare Arrangements

INTERVIEW with PARENT

New Zealand Council for Educational Research

(Interviewers: Please fill in Section A independently just prior to the interview)

SECTION A

BACKGROUND DATA

A1. ☐☐ Interviewee Number

A2. Interviewee Type _____

☐ a) = Father

☐ b) = Mother

☐ c) = Other

Specify_____

A3. ☐☐☐☐ Primary School's Number

A4. Gender of Interviewee

☐ a) = Male

☐ b) = Female

A5. ☐ a) = Both parents interviewed, separate data

☐ b) = Single/lone/solo parent

☐ c) = Only one parent available for interview

Opening Statements/Explanation

Researchers from the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) are carrying out this study to find out more about the early childhood care and education arrangements parents make during the first 5 years of a child's life, and the experiences families have of working and looking for work, and having time off to care for their children.

It is helpful being able to talk with you. Anything you say will be treated confidentially. I would like to tape this interview, if you are happy about this. I am the only person who will hear it (maybe if something happened to me, another member of our small research team might hear it). The tape will be wiped after your comments have been written down. What you say will be written down without your name on it.

The main purpose of the interview is to hear about mothers' and fathers' views and experiences of work and childcare arrangements. This interview is expected to take an hour or two. Your views are important to the study. But if there are any questions you would rather not answer, that's quite all right, we'll leave them out.

Date of Interview: _____

Time and place of Interview: _____

_____

Name of Interviewer: _____

_____

_____

SECTION B

CHILD DATA AND CHILDCARE ARRANGEMENTS

First, there are a few general questions about the children in your household:

1. How many children do you have?
(*Probe:* How many children have you given birth to?/fathered?)

☐☐

_____

_____

2.A How many children are living in your household?
(people aged 18 years or under)

☐☐

_____

B What are their ages and sexes?

1. Age ____ ☐ a) Female ☐ b) Male
2. Age ____ ☐ a) Female ☐ b) Male
3. Age ____ ☐ a) Female ☐ b) Male
4. Age ____ ☐ a) Female ☐ b) Male
5. Age ____ ☐ a) Female ☐ b) Male
6. Age ____ ☐ a) Female ☐ b) Male

3. How many adults are there living in your household?
(people aged over 18)

☐☐

_____

_____

4. What is the date of birth of the child who has just started school? (*child's name/children's names if twins or multiples)*

Date of Birth __/__/__

5. Is that child a girl or a boy?

(insert number of girls and number of boys if twins/multiples)

☐ a) Girl/s

☐ b) Boy/s

6. What is the place in the family of *(child's name/children's names if twins/multiples)* the child who has just started school?

(First, second, third, etc)

_____ 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

Now I have some questions about (child's name) early care and education experiences.

7. Who had the main responsibility for caring for (child's name) before he/she/they started school?

_____ 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Before he/she/they started school, did you have any informal childcare arrangements with someone else? For example, regular arrangements with relatives or friends?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

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(If Yes)

With whom and how often?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

9. Now I'd like to ask about how these arrangements worked out for you and for your child (children).
Firstly:
What were the good things (the benefits) for you, (and for other adults in your family)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

What didn't work out so well for you?
(*or,* What were difficulties for you with these arrangements?)

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

10. What were the good things about (the benefits of) these arrangements for (_____child's name)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

What didn't work out so well for him/her?
(or, What were difficulties for him/her with these arrangements?)

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

11. From birth to the age of 1 year, did (child's name/twins' names) attend:

(Please tick one or more as appropriate)

☐ a) a childcare centre or creche

☐ b) family daycare (Barnardo's or other agency)

☐ c) a kohanga reo

☐ d) any other language nest (e.g., Pacific Island) (If yes, specify which)

☐ e) a playcentre

☐ f) a playgroup

☐ g) any other early childhood/preschool group? (If yes, specify)

h 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

_____

_____

_____

(or if a Nanny was employed, record here)

_____

If more than one organisation ticked above:

Which of these did he/she attend most often?

i 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

_____

_____

_____

12. Now I'd like to ask about how these arrangements worked out for you and for your child (children).
Firstly:
What were the good things (the benefits) for you, (and for other adults in your family)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What didn't work out so well for you?
(*or,* What were difficulties for you with these arrangements?)

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

13. What were the good things about (the benefits of) these arrangements for (_____child's name)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

What didn't work out so well for him/her?
(*or,* What were difficulties for him/her with these arrangements?)

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

14. At age 1 year to 2 years, did he/she/they attend:

(Please tick one or more as appropriate)

☐ a) a childcare centre or creche

☐ b) family daycare (Barnardo's or other agency)

☐ c) a kohanga reo

☐ d) any other language nest (e.g., Pacific Island) (If yes specify which)

☐ e) a playcentre

☐ f) a playgroup

☐ g) any other early childhood/preschool group? (If yes, specify)

h 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(or if a Nanny was employed, record here)

_____

If more than one organisation ticked above:

Which of these did he/she attend most often?

i 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

15. I'd like to ask about how these arrangements worked out for you and for your child (children).

What were the good things (the benefits) for you, (and for other adults in your family)?

a 1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

What didn't work out so well for you?
(*or,* What were difficulties for you with these arrangements?)

b 1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

16. What were the good things about (the benefits of) these arrangements for (_____child's name)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

What didn't work out so well for him/her?
(or, What were difficulties for him/her with these arrangements?)

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

17. At age 2 year to 3 years, did he/she/they attend:

(Please tick one or more as appropriate)

☐ a) a childcare centre or creche

☐ b) family daycare (Barnardo's or other agency)

☐ c) a kohanga reo

☐ d) any other language nest (e.g., Pacific Island) (If yes, specify which)

☐ e) a playcentre

☐ f) a playgroup

☐ g) any other early childhood/preschool group? (If yes, specify)

h 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____

(or if a Nanny was employed, record here)

_____

If more than one organisation ticked above:

Which of these did he/she attend most often?

i 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

18. I'd like to ask about how these arrangements worked out for you and for your child (children).

What were the good things (the benefits) for you, (and for other adults in your family)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

What didn't work out so well for you?
(*or,* What were difficulties for you with these arrangements?)

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

19. What were the good things about (the benefits of) these arrangements for (_____child's name)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

What didn't work out so well for him/her?
(or, What were difficulties for him/her with these arrangements?)

_____ b 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

20. At age 3 years to 4 years, did he/she/they attend:

(Please tick one or more as appropriate)

☐ a) a childcare centre or creche

☐ b) family daycare (Barnardo's or other agency)

☐ c) a kohanga reo

☐ d) any other language nest (e.g., Pacific Island) (If yes, specify which)

☐ e) a playcentre

☐ f) a playgroup

☐ g) a kindergarten

☐ h) a private preschool

☐ i) any other early childhood/preschool group? (If yes, specify)

_____ 1 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9
_____
_____

(or if a Nanny was employed, record here)

_____

If more than one organisation ticked above:

Which of these did he/she attend most often?

_____ k 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____

21. I'd like to ask about how these arrangements worked out for you and for your child (children).
What were the good things (the benefits) for you, (and for other adults in your family)?

_____ a 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What didn't work out so well for you?
(or, What were difficulties for you with these arrangements?)

_____ b 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

22. What were the good things about (the benefits of) these arrangements for (_____child's name)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

What didn't work out so well for him/her?
(or, What were difficulties for him/her with these arrangements?)

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

23. At age 4 years to 5 years, did he/she/they attend:

(Please tick one or more as appropriate)

☐ a) a childcare centre or crecne

☐ b) family daycare (Barnardo's or other agency)

☐ c) a kohanga reo

☐ d) any other language nest (e.g., Pacific Island) (If yes, specify which)

☐ e) a playcentre

☐ f) a playgroup

☐ g) a kindergarten

☐ h) a private preschool

☐ i) any other early childhood/preschool group? (If yes, specify)

_____ j 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

(or if a Nanny was employed, record here)

_____

If more than one organisation ticked above:

Which of these did he/she attend most often?

_____ k 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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24. I'd like to ask about how these arrangements worked out for you and for your child (children). What were the good things (the benefits) for you, (and for other adults in your family)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

What didn't work out so well for you? (*or,* What were difficulties for you with these arrangements?)

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

25. What were the good things about (the benefits of) these arrangements for (_____child's name)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

What didn't work out so well for him/her?
(or, What were difficulties for him/her with these arrangements?)

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

Now I'm going to ask some more general questions about (_____child's name) care.

26. Thinking back again to before (_____child's name) started school, when he/she was sick/ill/unwell, who usually cared for him/her/?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

27. How did this work out for you/your family?)
(or, How satisfied were you with these arrangements?)

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

28. Now that he/she is at school, who looks after him/her when he/she is sick/ill/unwell?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

29. And now that _____ (child's name) is at school, who usually cares for him/her before school starts in the morning?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

30. How is this working out for you/your family? (*or,* How satisfied are you with these arrangements?)

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

31. Who usually cares for him/her after school?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

32. How is this working out for you/your family?
(*or,* How satisfied are you with these arrangements?)

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

33. Who will care for him/her during the school holidays?
(this summer)

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

34. Who helps _____ (child's name) with his/her school work (for example, reading)?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

35. How is this working out for you? (*or*, for the person/people helping)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

And for the child? How is reading at home working out for him/her?

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

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SECTION C

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Next there are some questions about families and work and your experiences as a parent. First there are just a few brief background questions. These are treated confidentially.

36A) Where were you born, and where did you grow up?

A 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

B) *Tick appropriate box*

☐ a) New Zealand

☐ b) elsewhere

37. a) How far did you go at school?
Probe: How many years were you at secondary school/ college?

☐☐

b) *(If 3 years or more)* What school qualifications did you complete?

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

c) And since leaving school, what educational or on-the-job qualifications have you completed?

c 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

38. Would you describe yourself as a Pakeha/European, a Maori, *(or add in appropriate alternative, e.g., Samoan, Cook Islander, Chinese, Greek) or what? (Pause)* How would you describe yourself? *(or, Which ethnic group do you belong to?)*

_____ 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

39. And _____ (child's name)? The same? *Probe:* How would you describe him /her? *(or, Which ethnic group does he/she belong to?)*

_____ 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

40. What is your age please?

☐☐

_____

_____

_____

41. Were you in the paid workforce at all during the first 5 years of _____'s (child's name's) life?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

(If No, go to question 44)

(If Yes)

42. a) When he/she was aged under 1 year, what kind of work were you doing?

_____ a 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

b) How many hours per week did you spend in paid work then?

☐☐

_____

_____

c) When he/she was aged 1 year to 2 years, what kind of work were you doing?

c 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

d) How many hours per week did you spend in paid work then?

☐☐

e) When he/she was aged 2 years to 3 years, what kind of work were you doing?

e 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

f) How many hours per week did you spend in paid work then?

☐☐

g) When he/she was aged 3 years to 4 years, what kind of work were you doing?

g 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

h) How many hours per week did you spend in paid work then?

☐☐

i) When he/she was aged 4 years to 5 years, what kind of work were you doing?

_____ i 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

j) How many hours per week did you spend in paid work then?

☐☐

_____

_____

_____

43 Remembering your experiences during _____'s (child's name's) first 5 years:

A) What were the benefits of (good things about) being in paid work and having a young child (or children)?

_____ a 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ b 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

B) What were the main difficulties with being in paid work and having a young child (or children)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

44. How many hours per week do you spend in paid work now?

☐☐

Comments

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

(If NOT in paid employment, go to question 48)

(If working)

45. a) How satisfied are you about these hours of work?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

b) And how satisfied are your family/whanau?

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

c) *Possible Probes:* What are the good things, and the less satisfying things about these hours?

c 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

(If working)

46. What kind of work do you do?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

47. a) How happy are you doing this work (in this field of work?)

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

b) How satisfied are you with your working conditions?

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

(If NOT in paid work)

48A) a) Are you looking for paid work (a job)?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

(If No)
B) Any comments about this?

B 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

(If Yes)
Possible further probes (if appropriate):

C) Would you like to make any comments about your experiences of looking for work (a job)?
Are you finding it hard?

C 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

(If looking for work)

D) How many hours would you like to be working?

D 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

49. As a mother/father of young children,
what are your views on mothers of young children working (being in paid employment)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

50. As a mother/father of young children,
what are your views on fathers of young children working (being in paid employment)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

6 1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

51. Were you studying at all during the first 5 years of _____'s (child's name's) life?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

(If No, go to question 54)

52. *(If Yes, fill in the matrix below)*
What type of course? How old was (_____child's name) at the time? How long was the course?

A. CHILD'S AGE	B. TYPE OF COURSE	C. LENGTH OF COURSE
☐ a) under 1 year	☐ _____	☐ _____
☐ b) 1 to 2 years	☐ _____	☐ _____
☐ c) 2 to 3 years	☐ _____	☐ _____
☐ d) 3 to 4 years	☐ _____	☐ _____
☐ e) 4 to 5 years	☐ _____	☐ _____

_____ f 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

53. Remembering your experiences during _____'s (child's name's) first 5 years:

a) What were the benefits of (good things about) studying when you had a young child (or children)?

_____ a 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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b) What were the main difficulties with studying when you had a young child (or children)?

b 1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

54. Were you involved in voluntary work, or unpaid work in the community, at all during the first 5 years of _____'s (child's name's) life?
For example, assisting in a playcentre, a kohanga reo, a kindergarten, a childcare centre, with Plunket, Parents' Centre, a school, sports coaching, church work, helping to run a club, marae, helping a neighbour?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

(If No, go to question 56)

(If Yes)

55. a) When (____child's name) was aged under 1 year, what type/s of voluntary work were you doing?

_____ a 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

b) On average how many hours of voluntary work did you do each week then?

☐☐

c) When (____child's name) was aged 1 to 2 years, what type/s of voluntary work were you doing?

_____ c 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

d) On average how many hours of voluntary work did you do each week then?

☐☐

_____
_____
_____

e) When (____child's name) was aged 2 to 3 years, what type/s of voluntary work were you doing?

_____ e 1 2 3
_____ 4 5 6
_____ 7 8 9

f) On average how many hours of voluntary work did you do each week then?

☐☐

g) When (____child's name) was aged 3 to 4 years, what type/s of voluntary work were you doing?

g 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

h) On average how many hours of voluntary work did you do each week then?

☐☐

i) When (____child's name) was aged 4 to 5 years, what type/s of voluntary work were you doing?

i 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

j) On average how many hours of voluntary work did you do each week then?

☐☐

56. What types of voluntary or community work are you doing now? (if any)
Probe: For example, assisting in a playcentre, a kohanga reo, a kindergarten, a childcare centre, with Plunket, Parents' Centre, a school, sports coaching, church work, helping to run a club, marae, helping a neighbour?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

57A) How many hours per week do you spend on voluntary or community work now?

☐☐

B) *Comments:*

b1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

SECTION D

PARENTAL LEAVE EXPERIENCES AND POLICIES

Now I'd like to ask some questions about parents' leave from work. Again, your experiences and views are important.

58. Were you in the paid workforce during the year before _____ *(child's or twins' etc. names)* was born?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

(If No, go to question 62)

59. *(If Yes)* Did you take maternity/paternity leave?

☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

(If No leave taken) Was this your choice, or did your work place not allow you to take leave?

_____ 1 2 3

_____ 4 5 6

_____ 7 8 9

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Probe: Why was this?
(i.e., Why was this your choice? *or,* Why was this leave not permitted?

d 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

60. *(If Yes, leave taken)* What were the conditions of this leave?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

61. How satisfied were you with the amount of leave you had around the time of the birth?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

62. Who helped you in the first weeks at home after the birth?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

63. How did this work out (for you/your family)?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

64. What leave (provisions) do you want to be available for mothers when they have a baby?
(or, What leave provisions do you think should be available for mothers when they have a baby?)

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

65. What leave (provisions) do you want to be available for fathers when their baby is born?
(or, What leave provisions do you think should be available for fathers when they have a baby?)

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

66. What leave do you want to be (should be) available for parents in the workforce when their young children are ill?

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

67. Can you suggest anything else that would make it easier for parents (in general) when they have a sick child (or children)?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

68. From your experience, is there anything else you would like to say about parental leave?

a 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

b 1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9

Thank you for taking part in the interview. This was very helpful and useful. When the study is finished we will write a summary of what we found. Everyone who took part is welcome to a copy; do you want us to send one to you?

69. ☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

(If yes, record name and postal address on a separate page).

INTERVIEWER DETAILS

(Record these details very soon after the interview)

What was the duration of interview _____

Was the interview tape recorded?

70. ☐ a) Yes ☐ b) No

Comments/Observations

e.g., Persons present, distractions, concerns of interviewer or of interviewee.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Any comments about language:
e.g., How well did the interviewee speak and understand English? What was the respondent's first language? (Did you use any languages other than English? Which and how much?)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____